



JOURNAL OF U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS HISTORY

VERITAS

Volume 18 / Number 1

Spreading the Word Fast

PSYOP in Operation JUST CAUSE

Beyond the Numbers

The 528th Support Battalion in Operations
DESERT SHIELD & DESERT STORM

Honoring an ARSOF Legend

Major General Robert T. Frederick



Message from the COMMAND HISTORIAN

2022 is a banner year for Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF). The Rangers and Special Forces (SF) will both celebrate 80th anniversaries. 1st Ranger Battalion, a World War II lineage unit of the 75th Ranger Regiment, was activated on 19 June 1942 and went on to fight in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy. In addition, the lineage unit for all SF Groups (SFGs), the combined American-Canadian First Special Service Force (FSSF), was activated on 9 July 1942 and saw extensive combat in Italy and Southern France. Also, 2022 holds the 70th anniversaries of the founding of the Psychological Warfare Center, today's U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, on 10 April 1952, and the 10th SFG—the first of its kind—on 11 June 1952. Through commemorating these and other key historical events, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) will continue to honor its rich legacy and the brave men and women who came before us. For our most recent products highlighting such milestones, please keep an eye on the ARSOF History website: <https://arsof-history.org>.

In the spirit of recognizing and valuing our people, the USASOC History Office would like to wish a fond farewell to SF Branch Historian Robert D. Seals. His unmatched enthusiasm, evidenced by his forward-leaning efforts in dedicating our building to FSSF commander Major General (MG) Robert T. Frederick last December (detailed in this issue), will truly be missed. Thankfully, Bob still serves within the command, so ARSOF will continue to benefit from his knowledge and expertise.

On a more solemn note, we must also bid farewell to two of our recently lost icons. Sergeant Gary B. Beikirch, Medal of Honor recipient for actions on 1 April 1970 while serving with 5th SFG in Vietnam, passed away on 26 December 2021 and is memorialized on the back cover of this issue. MG John K. Singlaub, who served with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and as a commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group (MACV-SOG), passed away on 29 January 2022 at 100 years of age. The 2011 recipient of the U.S. Special Operations Command Bull Simons Award, MG Singlaub was the last living American Jedburgh from the OSS. We extend our condolences and thanks to the families of these two ARSOF warriors.

We hope you enjoy this edition of *Veritas*. This issue looks at ARSOF's first operations after the establishment of USASOC. Operations JUST CAUSE, DESERT SHIELD, and DESERT STORM highlighted the skills and capabilities that ARSOF brought to the fight. These same skills were once again called upon by the nation in the post-9/11 period, as shown in the photo essay. Finally, as part of the 80th Anniversary of the First Special Service Force, we present a short biographical essay about its founder, MG Frederick. The legacy of this 'fighting general' from World War II has endured as an example to ARSOF soldiers, past, present, and future. Thanks to you, our readers, for your continued support. **-Sine Pari**

USASOC History Office Staff

COMMAND HISTORIAN

TROY J. SACQUETY, PHD

Troy J. Sacquety earned an MA from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and a PhD in Military History from Texas A&M University. Prior to joining the USASOC History Office staff in August 2006, he worked several years for the Central Intelligence Agency. His research interests include Army and Office of Strategic Services special operations during World War II, and U.S. Army Civil Affairs.

DEPUTY COMMAND HISTORIAN

JARED M. TRACY, PHD

Jared M. Tracy served six years in the U.S. Army, and became a historian at USASOC in December 2010. He earned an MA in History from Virginia Commonwealth University and a PhD in History from Kansas State University. His research is focused on the history of U.S. Army Psychological Operations.

CHRISTOPHER E. HOWARD

Christopher E. Howard served four years in the U.S. Army before earning an MA in History from Appalachian State University. He worked as a Psychological Operations Training Specialist at USAJFKSWCS before joining the USASOC History Office in June 2018. His research is focused on the history of ARSOF sustainment and support, USAJFKSWCS, and Special Operations Aviation.

ROBERT D. SEALS

Robert D. Seals is a graduate of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and a retired Special Forces officer. He earned an MA in Military History from Norwich University and worked at the Special Operations Mission Training Center before joining the USASOC History Office in March 2018. As of this printing, Mr. Seals is no longer assigned to the USASOC History Office.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

All USASOC History Office efforts, to include publication of Veritas, are a team effort. They would not be possible without participation and support from our graphic and web designers, archivists, marketing and video production experts, and digitization specialists.



Cover: The 45th ID Commander at age thirty-seven, MG Frederick ended World War II with eight Purple Hearts, two Distinguished Service Crosses, a Silver Star, and two Bronze Star medals.

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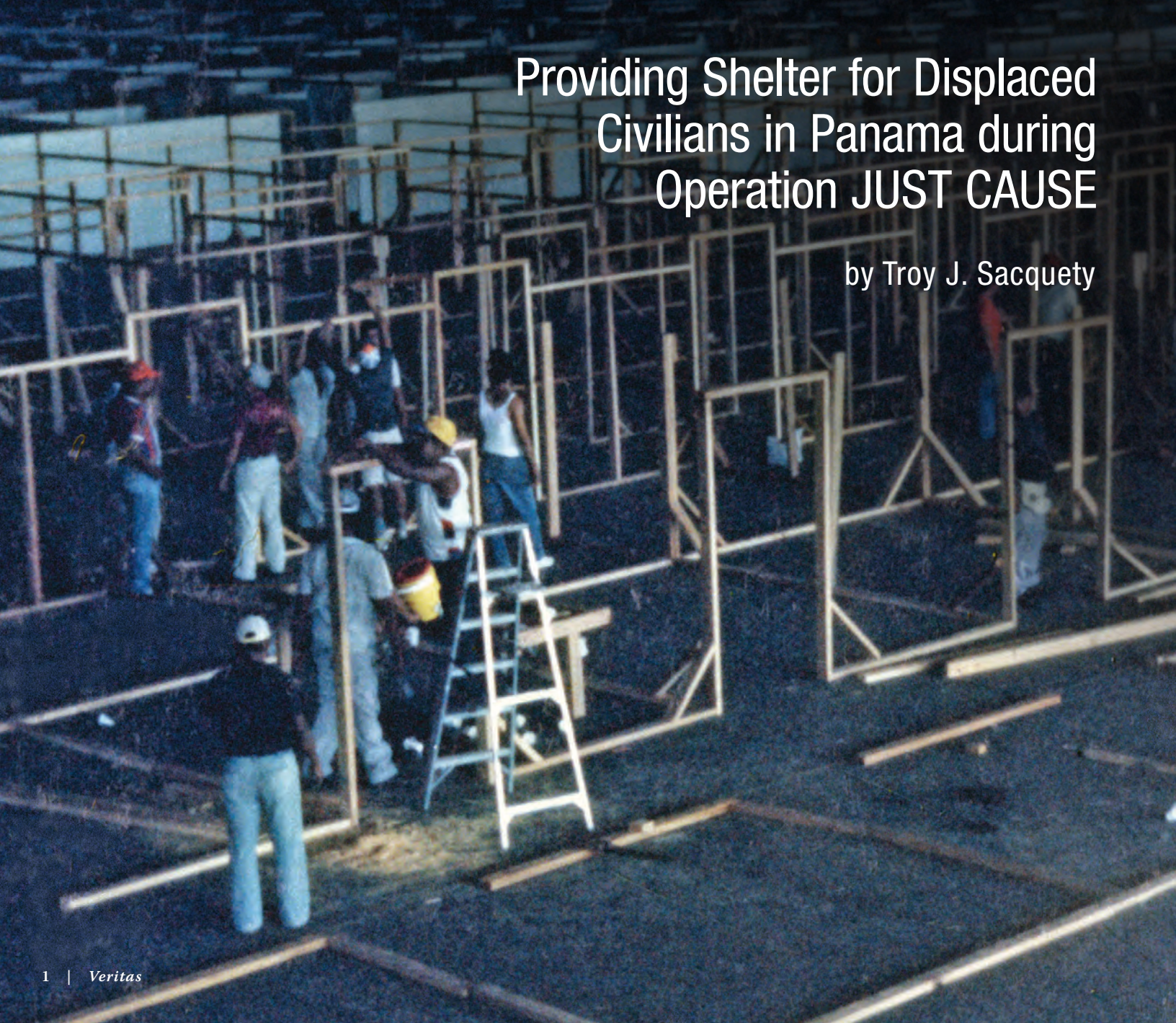


Special Forces soldiers are extracted from a mountain pinnacle in Zabul Province, Afghanistan, by a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter in 2010.

From **HANGAR** to **HOUSING**

Providing Shelter for Displaced
Civilians in Panama during
Operation JUST CAUSE

by Troy J. Sacquety



Abstract: During Operation JUST CAUSE, one 96th Civil Affairs (CA) Battalion officer received a particularly challenging mission. Despite having no experience in project management or refugee assistance, Company C commander, Major Richard M. Cheek, oversaw the creation of a housing facility for 2,500 displaced civilians (DCs) in just two weeks. The major accomplished his difficult mission by working by, with, and through local and interagency partners.

On the morning of 13 January 1990, approximately 2,500 Panamanian displaced civilians (DCs) arrived by bus and disembarked outside the entrance to Albrook Air Force Station. The DCs, whose homes had been destroyed during the early hours of Operation JUST CAUSE, initially found refuge at the Balboa High School, but had to relocate so the school could reopen for classes. Major (MAJ) Richard M. Cheek, Commander, Company C, 96th Civil Affairs (CA) Battalion, oversaw the conversion of a former Panama Defense Forces (PDF) hangar into a new temporary housing facility in just two weeks. This article briefly explains the situation that led to MAJ Cheek's mission, and how, as the project manager, he successfully worked through local, interagency, and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to accomplish this difficult task.

96th CA Tasking

On 20 December 1989, U.S. forces launched Operation JUST CAUSE to remove Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega from power. Three teams, of four to three men each, from Company A, 96th CA, which was focused on Latin America, were attached to units of the 75th Ranger Regiment for their assaults at the

Torrijos-Tocumen Airport Complex and Rio Hato.¹ The rest of the 130-man 96th CA Battalion had not been scheduled to participate in the invasion. Planners had not anticipated how quickly they would have to implement post-combat stabilization efforts, under the civil-military operations plan dubbed BLIND LOGIC. That realization set in early on 20 December when U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) Commander, General (GEN) Maxwell R. Thurman, told Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Colin L. Powell, that no CA units were "available in the theater to support my mission requirements."² GEN Powell immediately ordered the 96th CA Battalion (-) to deploy to Panama. The bulk of the unit left Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and arrived at Howard Air Force Base, Panama, on 22 December. Once in Panama, Joint Task Force (JTF)-South tasked the 96th CA with a variety of on-the-spot situational missions and with providing teams to tactical units throughout the country.

One key but unplanned mission the 96th CA received was to run an impromptu DC facility located at Balboa High School. In the course of the early fighting for the PDF headquarters, *La Comandancia*, a fire raged through packed shanties in the nearby poverty-stricken



Profile:

MAJ Richard M. Cheek

Richard M. Cheek enlisted in the Army as an Infantryman in 1970. He served on the Korean Demilitarized Zone, but left active duty in 1972. He was in the U.S. Army Reserves for seven months before returning to active duty. He served with the 101st Airborne Division before moving on to assignments in Korea; Fort Benning, Georgia; and Hawaii. Cheek received a direct commission to First Lieutenant in 1980. As an Infantry Officer, he had assignments in the S-1 and S-5 of 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He then went to staff assignments at Fort Stewart, Georgia, with the 2nd Infantry Brigade, 24th Infantry Division, and 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment.

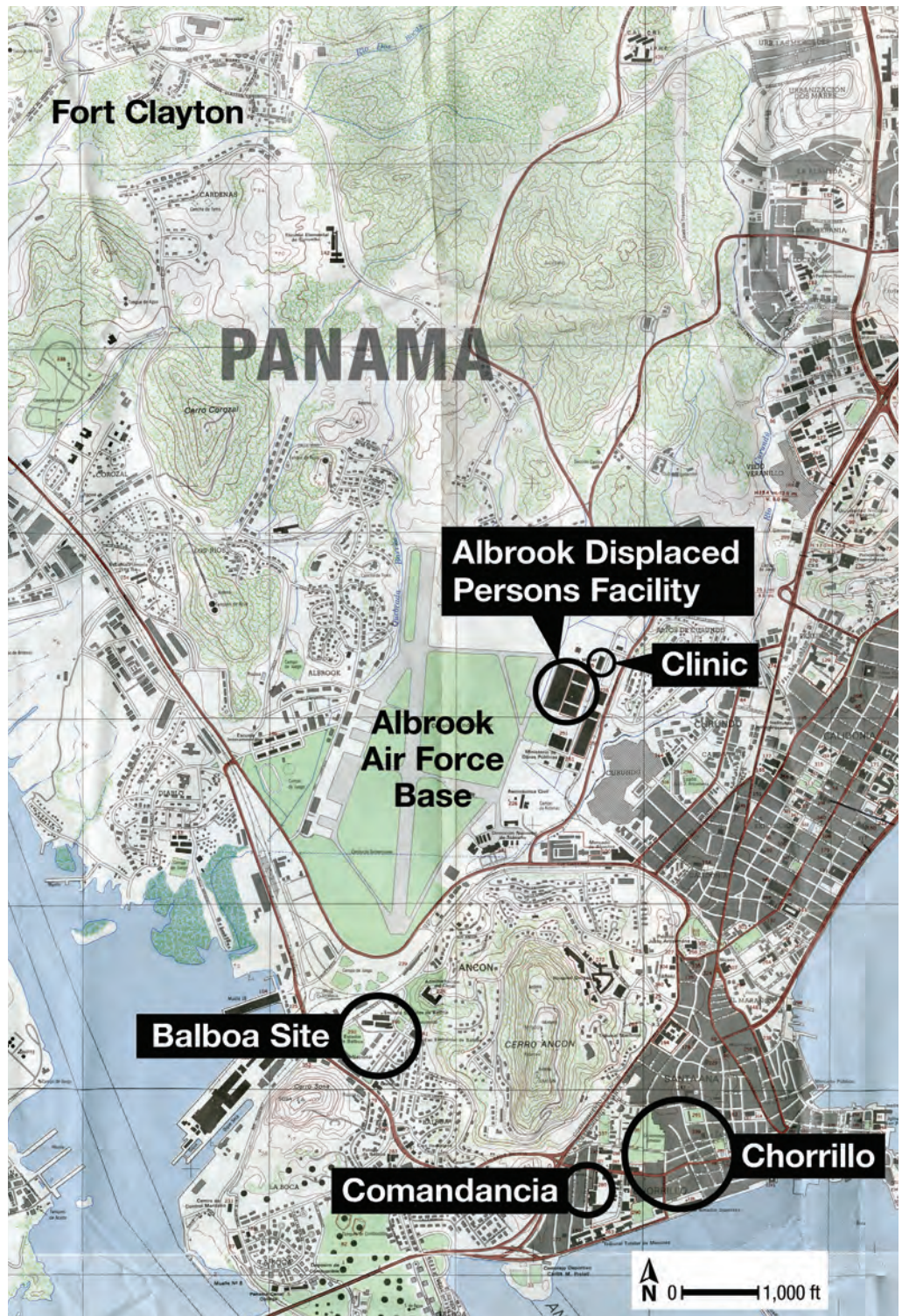
In 1985, he was posted to the 96th CA as a platoon leader. He was in the 96th for nearly two years before being assigned to the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, Camp Hovey, South Korea. He was a battalion S-3 Air, Maintenance Officer, and the Headquarters and Headquarters Company Commander, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, before asking to return to the 96th in 1988. Following Operation JUST CAUSE, MAJ Cheek deployed to Saudi Arabia in 1990 for Operation DESERT SHIELD, and helped to evacuate non-combatants. He returned home early in 1991 for mandatory retirement.

neighborhood of El Chorrillo. With nowhere else to go, thousands of homeless Panamanians squatted on the Balboa High School grounds, threatening an unanticipated potential humanitarian disaster. To prevent this, ten soldiers from Company D, 96th CA Battalion, administered the facility and solved problems concerning sanitation, food distribution, housing, and medical issues. While most of the DCs found housing with family or friends, some 2,500 remained when the facility was scheduled to close so Balboa High School could reopen for classes on 16 January 1990.³

MAJ Richard M. Cheek had been on Christmas leave in Indiana when JUST CAUSE began. As the commander of Company C, operationally oriented to the Middle East, neither MAJ Cheek nor the 96th CA Battalion leadership anticipated immediate deployment to Panama. On 20 December, as the 96th CA was scrambling to deploy, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Michael P. Peters, Commander, 96th CA Battalion, called MAJ Cheek and directed him to get to Panama as soon as possible. Driving through a snowstorm to Fort Bragg, MAJ Cheek caught a military transport and arrived in Panama on Christmas Day.⁴

Once on the ground, MAJ Cheek found that his soldiers in Company C, who had previously deployed without him, were already assigned to missions throughout Panama. Because the 96th was the only CA unit in Panama, JTF-South tasked it with multiple simultaneous missions. To meet those expectations, LTC Peters had to use every soldier available, and split up his companies

and teams as required. With the other 96th company commanders already tasked, MAJ Cheek's arrival was a godsend to the 96th CA command, which needed a field grade officer to address unexpected contingencies. LTC Peters tasked him with pop-up assignments until 27 December. Anticipating that another housing facility would be needed, LTC Peters directed MAJ Cheek to establish a new DC housing facility.⁵



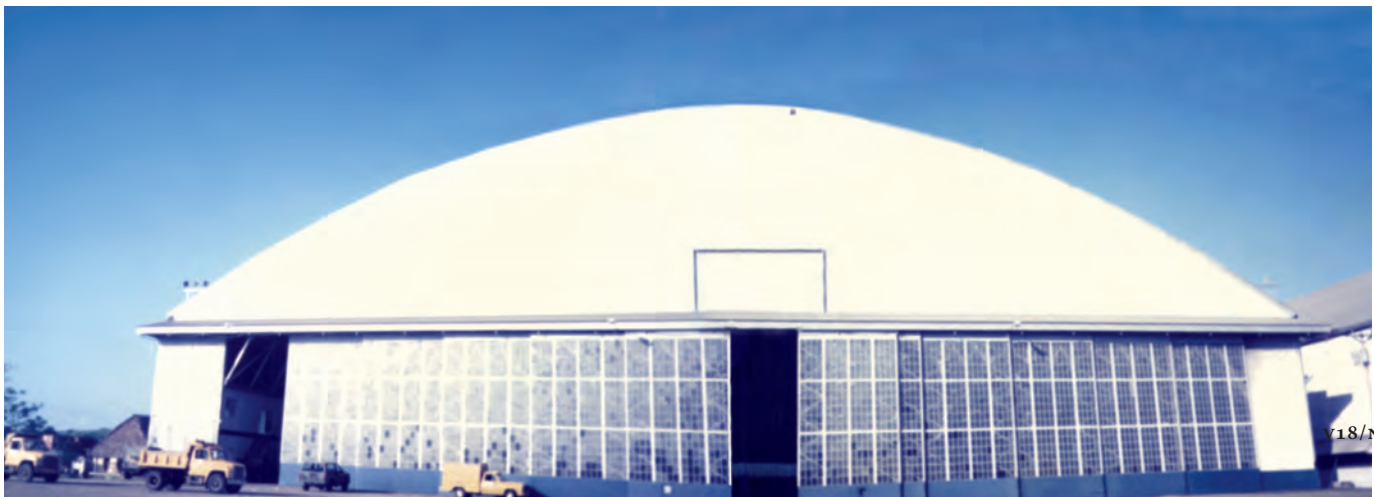
New DC Facility

Cheek was put in charge of the project, with no greater elaboration than “get it done.”⁶ Because soldiers from the 96th CA were detailed to other missions, he could only expect to receive occasional help and guidance from the battalion staff at nearby Fort Clayton, which was just over a mile away. However, Cheek did have the assistance of supply Staff Sergeant (SSG) Edwin P. Onan, who functioned as an informal liaison with the battalion staff. “Onan,” Cheek noted, “would help scrounge [supplies] and run errands. He had a hundred tasks.”⁷ In addition, MAJ Cheek visited and talked with the personnel who ran the Balboa DC facility.⁸ From them, he understood the critical needs that had to be met: sanitation, housing, and medical care. Finally, in early January, when reserve CA personnel deployed to Panama, Cheek received translator assistance from Sergeant (SGT) Gabrielle Calderon. However, managing the effort was firmly on Cheek’s shoulders. Despite having no experience in refugee assistance, he became the ‘go-to guy’ who had to solve a multitude of tasks and problems of all sizes to be successful.⁹

MAJ Cheek’s first stop was gaining further guidance from JTF-South, which was directing operations in Panama and would be his tasking authority. There, LTC A. Dwayne Aaron, the J-5 (Civil Affairs), briefed Cheek and said, based on the number then at Balboa, that a new facility to house 10,000 DCs was needed.¹⁰ While at JTF-South, MAJ Cheek also fortuitously met with Alejandro James, a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) representative. James explained that his agency could assist by providing critical funding and supplies.

MAJ Cheek then went to the existing Balboa DC facility, where he saw first-hand the scale, complexity, and urgency of his task. Although they had to learn ‘on the fly,’ the 96th CA personnel running Balboa provided insight on the major areas MAJ Cheek had to address. The CA soldiers were also a sounding board for solutions that might work best to meet the DCs’ basic needs at the new facility. With their perspective in mind, Cheek planned and coordinated until 31 December, when the United States Army-South (USARSO) Corps of Engineers offered a former PDF hangar at Albrook Air Force Station, to become the site of the new DC facility.¹¹

Left: Jack Carrol, American Red Cross, and Alejandro James, USAID, provided considerable help during the DC facility construction. **Middle:** SSG Edwin P. Onan helped MAJ Cheek scrounge supplies and run requests for assistance back to the 96th CA Battalion staff, based at nearby Fort Clayton. **Right:** CA reservist SGT Gabrielle Calderon provided translator support when needed. Most of the time, the Panamanians spoke enough English that MAJ Cheek, a non-Spanish speaker, could communicate. **Bottom:** A composite view shows the size of the hangar.





Top: This view shows some of the vehicles that were parked in the hangar. MAJ Cheek directed their removal so he had space to create a DC shelter. **Middle:** A second story office inside the hangar provided a place for facility employees to work once the camp was up and running. Previously, it served as MAJ Cheek's office. **Bottom:** When U.S. Army engineers removed the vehicles, weapons, and ammunition, MAJ Cheek directed that the hangar be cleaned. Once clean, Panamanian laborers began construction of individual housing cubicles.

With the location established, Cheek went to assess the habitability of the hangar. What he found was less than promising. The hangar was still packed with vehicles, many of which had been stolen from U.S. owners by the PDF, and it held large quantities of weapons, ammunition, and, surprisingly, toys and sports equipment. Fortunately, USARSO Engineers had already been tasked by their command to fix the basic problems in the hangar and to install needed amenities.

The engineers removed the cars, weapons, and ammunition. However, Cheek requested to retain the toys and sports equipment for distribution to the DCs when they arrived.¹² The engineers then cleaned the hangar, fixed lighting problems and leaks in the roof, installed showers and toilets, and sited dumpsters for trash. Their efforts provided basic sanitation needs for the facility.¹³ Cheek then determined that he needed to find assistance to create housing facilities and the necessary amenities within the hangar. Fortunately, help arrived the next day from an unexpected source.¹⁴

Panamanian Assistance Arrives

Working in the hangar that afternoon, Cheek was considering how to establish housing for the DCs when a limousine pulled up. A woman inside beckoned him over and asked for a tour. She said her name was Teresa Reyes Calderón, but MAJ Cheek had no clue who she was. He surmised that she was among the numerous dignitaries whose visits only managed to delay progress. Cheek remembered, “I had plenty of people pop in and offer advice, but they did not stick around” to help implement it.¹⁵ MAJ Cheek politely told his visitor that he was busy, but that she could “walk around and then ask questions.”

Señora Calderón interrupted MAJ Cheek and said, “I am the vice president’s wife. I am here to help.”¹⁶ That got Cheek’s attention and prompted him to give her a tour. Calderón proved to be a godsend. She was a forceful and tireless partner, who visited the facility daily and worked closely with MAJ Cheek to improve the site. Calderón leveraged her substantial connections with Panamanian government officials to obtain the badly needed personnel and funds to make the project a success.¹⁷ In order to help establish the post-Noriega government, she was adamant that Panamanians personally did the work to ready the hangar to house families.

As a first step, Calderón obtained the services of a Panamanian government architect. The architect designed housing cubicles, specifying how they would be constructed and laid out within the hangar. He designed each cubicle to house a family of four. Each space was marked on the floors. *Señora* Calderón then arranged for Panamanian public works employees to put up the cubicles. The public works employees were to frame out the cubicles with lumber and then line them with cloth for privacy. Calderón explained to the workers that although they were employees of the Panamanian government, they still reported directly to MAJ Cheek and were to follow his orders. Panamanian workers had hand tools, but needed construction supplies.¹⁸

The shortage of building materials prompted Cheek to reach out to Alejandro James, the USAID representative he met during his initial survey of the situation. James provided USAID funds to contract a nearby sawmill to produce and deliver the lumber needed to construct the cubicles. Through USAID, James also purchased sufficient rolls of tarpaulin-like material to line the

“I had plenty of people pop in and offer advice, but they did not stick around...”

— MAJ Richard M. Cheek



U.S. Army engineers installed commodes for the DCs’ use.



After engineers constructed toilets, MAJ Cheek had partitions and privacy screens installed.



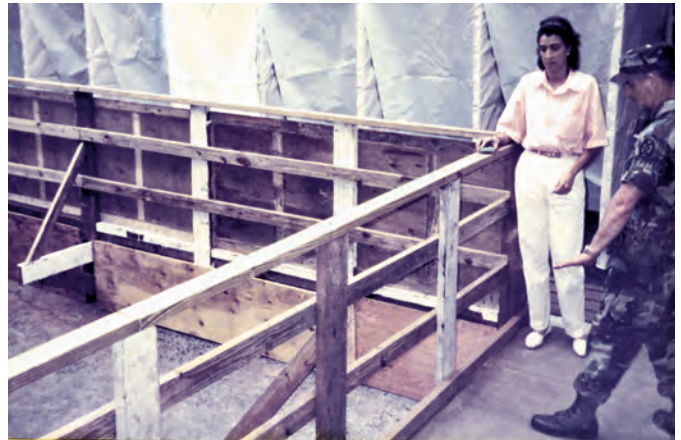
Above: This photo shows the location of the dispensary (+) relative to the hangar that housed many of the DCs. CPT Margaret V. Cain, 361st CA Brigade, was responsible for getting the dispensary operational. **Right:** MAJ Cheek discusses the sanitation facilities with *Señora* Calderón. She told him that the facilities, while basic to him, were nicer than what the DCs had prior to the war.

cubicle walls. Finally, he arranged for USAID to deliver five thousand cots and blankets to Albrook.¹⁹ With the cubicles being built, MAJ Cheek turned his attention to other details.

In particular, Cheek wanted to improve the amenities. Although U.S. Army engineers had already installed toilets, they stood out in the open. Cheek directed some of the Panamanian workers who were working on the cubicles to also create privacy partitions for use between the commodes. Then, he designated half of them for male use, and the rest for females. Similarly, USARSO engineers had constructed rudimentary showers, but had not made enough to designate some for male or female use. To solve that problem, Cheek set different times when each sex could use the bathing facilities. For clothes washing, MAJ Cheek asked the engineers to construct a row of sinks outside the hangar. After the clothes were washed, the DCs would dry them on clothes lines, using cord provided by MAJ Cheek.²⁰

The toilet, showering, and washing facilities were basic, but functional. With U.S. standards in mind, MAJ Cheek did not think that they were enough. He expressed his concern over the lack of hot running water and seats on the toilets to *Señora* Calderón. She replied that the facility was a dramatic improvement over the DCs' pre-conflict living standards.²¹ El Chorillo had been a densely-packed, poverty-stricken neighborhood of tin shanties and wood buildings with neither running water nor flushing toilets.²² Relieved that his efforts more than met the need, MAJ Cheek concentrated on providing cooking facilities.

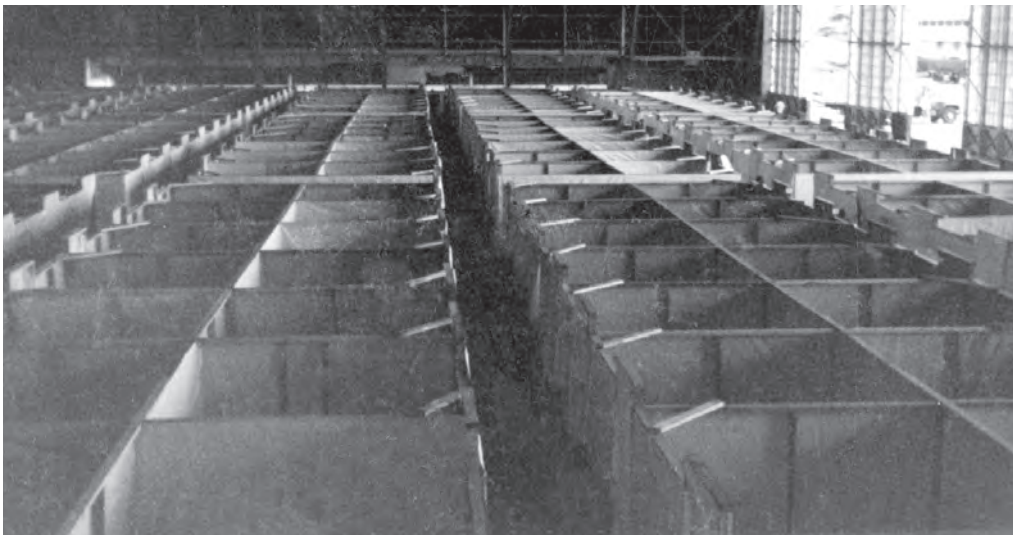
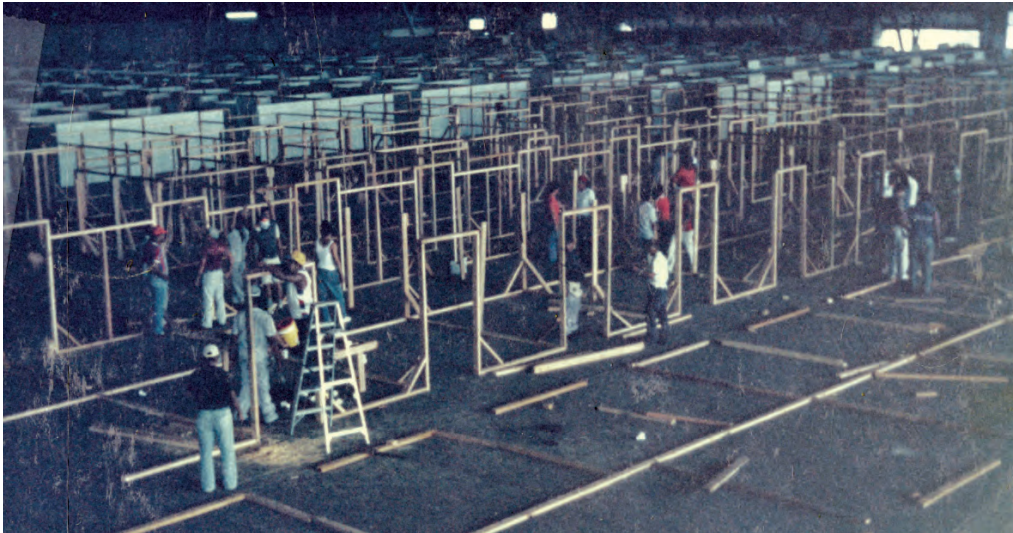
Again, Alejandro James and USAID were able to help. James introduced Cheek to Jack Carrol of the American Red Cross, who was temporarily working for USAID. Carrol offered his assistance in coordinating the



efforts of local Catholic charities that had volunteered to provide food and cooks. While Carrol worked out the details, Cheek obtained excess U.S. Army mobile kitchens from USARSO. With the mobile kitchens, the Catholic volunteers could prepare basic fare of rice, beans, and pork.²³ As a finishing touch, Cheek directed the Panamanian laborers to construct picnic-style tables to provide seating for the DCs to eat. Cheek then turned his attention to putting systems in place to help the DCs better manage their family responsibilities.

Additional Needs Determined

Believing it critical to their daily life, MAJ Cheek designated space in the hangar for child care. MAJ Cheek reasoned that because the DCs had lost much of the community support that the El Chorillo *barrio* had provided, those who were employed outside the facility needed someone to watch their children while they were away. Plus, having the children under supervision would also make managing the facility easier. Again, local Catholic churches stepped in and agreed to provide volunteers to supervise the children while their parents worked. Because MAJ Cheek had the foresight to keep the toys and sports equipment that had originally been in the hangar, he was able to turn those items over to the child care center staff. Then, MAJ Cheek asked Calderón to direct the local



Top: Once MG Marc A. Cisneros obtained the assistance of the U.S. Air Force 24th Civil Engineering Squadron to help with cubicle construction, the pace picked up dramatically. **Middle:** This photo shows how the cubicles were spaced and framed. **Bottom:** With 506 cubicles complete in the hangar, the DCs were able to transfer from the facility at Balboa High School to Albrook.

bus system to establish a stop near the entrance to the facility to provide much needed transportation for the DCs to get back and forth to work.²⁴ MAJ Cheek also arranged for the DCs' mail to be delivered to Albrook and had four payphones installed outside the facility.²⁵

The last major essential item was health care. Fortunately, the Civil Affairs Task Force (CATF), an organization composed of CA reservists that fell under the

J-5 directorate of JTF-South, dispatched Captain (CPT) Margaret V. Cain of the 361st CA Brigade to Albrook in early January.²⁶ She told Cheek, who did not know beforehand that she was coming, that she was a nurse when not on active duty. MAJ Cheek directed her to create an infirmary out of a vacant building near the hangar. CPT Cain obtained sufficient medical equipment and supplies from nearby U.S. Army Gorgas Hospital and got

the infirmary operational so rapidly that the elderly residents from Balboa arrived at Albrook days earlier than the other DCs. Cheek recalled that CPT Cain was “super” and that her work took a lot “off my plate.”²⁷ The only issue remaining was completing the housing.

Speeding Up Completion

Unfortunately, due to a lack of power tools, construction of the cubicles lagged behind, threatening to prevent the on-schedule transfer. *Señora* Calderón wanted construction of the cubicles to be done with only Panamanian labor; however, by 7 January 1990, only 30 had been completed. As a result, they could only house 120 of the expected 2,500 DCs.²⁸ Once again, *Señora* Calderón proved invaluable. On 8 January, she mentioned to MAJ Cheek that she was going to dinner that evening with the Commanding General, USARSO, Major General (MG) Marc A. Cisneros, and she asked if Cheek needed anything.²⁹ Cheek told her that he needed an engineer unit to speed the cubicle construction. The next day, MG Cisneros visited Albrook and asked Cheek directly, “What do you need to be done in four days?” MAJ Cheek replied “an engineer unit.” MG Cisneros agreed to the request if the major would personally guarantee that the facility would be ready in that time frame.³⁰ When MAJ Cheek replied in the affirmative, MG Cisneros arranged for the U.S. Air Force 24th Civil Engineering Squadron to provide the needed labor.³¹ The airmen brought power tools and “got cubicles up one after another.”³² By 11 January, all of the planned 506 cubicles were completed.³³ However, that still was not enough to house all the DCs, so Cheek asked *Señora* Calderón for and received additional Panamanian labor. He directed them to erect General Purpose (GP) Medium tents outside the hangar to house single males. Everything was then set for the DCs to move from Balboa on 13 January 1990.

DCs Relocated

On that day, the DCs at Balboa boarded buses according to a schedule created by members of Company D, 96th CA Battalion. The 1st Psychological Operations Battalion also provided soldiers who used loudspeakers to provide information to calm the crowds.³⁴ Because of space limitations on the busses, each DC was only allowed to hand carry a single bag of personal items. The rest of their belongings were consolidated and then transported by truck for the mile drive to Albrook, where U.S. soldiers stood ready to help unload. A detachment from 5th Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, provided security to prevent any outside interference from lingering Noriega supporters.³⁵ Meanwhile, as 96th CA personnel helped unload passengers from the buses,

MAJ Cheek saw to any last-minute tasks. However, the job of actually processing the DCs into Albrook was an all-Panamanian affair.

Señora Calderón led that effort. In order to show the approximately 2,500 DCs that the post-Noriega government of Panama truly cared about them, she insisted on personally registering each person. The Panamanian Red Cross then showed each family to its assigned cubicle and escorted the single males to their tents. Although the process took hours, moving day proceeded without incident. That allowed the 96th CA Battalion to then turn the DC mission at Albrook over to Colonel (COL) William W. Graham, 361st CA Brigade.³⁶

Despite having no experience in project management or DC operations, MAJ Cheek worked by, with, and through partners to construct a DC facility in only two weeks. As he described it, “I fought my war with a steno book and a pen.”³⁷ He added, “I was an Infantry Officer assigned to CA. I had never built anything in my life. It was a tough job and the learning curve was huge.”³⁸ Nonetheless, his efforts produced the required food, clothing, and shelter to sustain 2,500 Panamanians, significantly lessening the suffering of those displaced during Operation JUST CAUSE. For Cheek, the experience helped him begin a career in disaster management after retiring from the Army in 1991. 🇺🇸

Takeaways:

- 1 Finding effective interagency and host-nation partners was critical to success for a CA officer with no previous experience in project management or DC operations.
- 2 MAJ Cheek's project management at the Albrook facility ensured that the housing, sanitation, and medical needs of thousands of DCs were satisfactorily met.
- 3 The successful effort at Albrook allowed the 96th CA to turn DC operations over to other partners and disengage from Panama.

Endnotes

- 1 For more on 96th CA operations at the Torrijos-Tocumen Airport Complex, see Troy J. Sacquety, “Civil Affairs Supports the Assault: Company A, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion at the Torrijos International Airport Terminal,” *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 16, no. 1 (2020): 14-20, also on internet at https://arsof-history.org/articles/20jan_ca_in_the_assault_page_1.html
- 2 Ronald H. Cole, *Operation JUST CAUSE Panama* (Washington DC: Joint History Office, 1995), 46.
- 3 For more on 96th CA operations at the Balboa DC Facility, see Troy J.

- Sacquety, "Averting Disaster: Company D, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion at the Displaced Civilians Facility," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 16, no. 1 (2020): 31-40, also on internet at https://arsof-history.org/articles/20apr_averting_disaster_page_1.html
- 4 Richard M. Cheek, interview by Troy J. Sacquety, 2 December 2019, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Cheek interview, 2 December 2019.
 - 5 Cheek interview, 2 December 2019.
 - 6 Richard M. Cheek, email to Troy J. Sacquety, "SUBJECT: Albroom," 31 November 2020, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Richard M. Cheek email.
 - 7 Cheek interview, 2 December 2019.
 - 8 Richard M. Cheek email.
 - 9 Richard M. Cheek, interview by Troy J. Sacquety, 23 June 2020, USASOC History Office Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Cheek interview, 23 June 2020. **Cheek did have CA training and had planned for refugee assistance for an exercise in Kenya in 1989.**
 - 10 COL William W. Graham, "Situation Report=DC Team=1700, 6 Jan-1700, 7 Jan," 7 January 1990, copy in Folder "After Action Report-Operation JUST CAUSE (Panama) includes Daily Situation Reports (1-30 Jan 1990)," USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 11 Cheek interview, 2 December 2019; Civil Affairs Task Force, "Chronological Events Displaced Civilian Community," 1990, copy in Folder, "Civil Affairs Chronology-Ancon, Panama Chronological Events Jan 1990," USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 12 **Only one vehicle remained, which was a van said to be owned by Noriega himself. That van was secured by the XVIII Corps G-2.** Cheek interview, 2 December 2019.
 - 13 **A platoon from the 193rd Infantry Brigade provided security.**
 - 14 Richard M. Cheek, interview by Troy J. Sacquety, 19 January 2018, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter, Cheek interview, 19 January 2018.
 - 15 Cheek interview, 2 December 2019.
 - 16 Cheek interview, 2 December 2019.
 - 17 **Calderón had a brush with danger, when, several days later, she walked into a nearby building and found some PDF soldiers hiding. She called for MAJ Cheek to come over and take them into custody, then "chewed out" the PDF members for supporting Noriega. Hungry, unarmed, and tired from days in hiding, the PDF members offered no resistance. Cheek turned them over to the 193rd Infantry Brigade soldiers who were providing security.** Cheek interview, 2 December 2019.
 - 18 Cheek interview, 23 June 2020.
 - 19 Cheek interview, 23 June 2020.
 - 20 Cheek interview, 23 June 2020.
 - 21 Cheek interview, 23 June 2020. **Calderón was in fact worried that the facility would be too nice, and the DCs would not want to return to their homes.**
 - 22 Cheek interview, 23 June 2020.
 - 23 Cheek interview, 2 December 2019.
 - 24 COL William W. Graham, "Situation Report=DC Team=1700, 6 Jan-1700, 7 Jan," 7 January 1990, copy in Folder "After Action Report-Operation JUST CAUSE (Panama) includes Daily Situation Reports (1-30 Jan 1990)," USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 25 COL William W. Graham, "Situation Report=DC Team=1700, 9 Jan-1700, 10 Jan," 10 January 1990, copy in Folder "After Action Report-Operation JUST CAUSE (Panama) includes Daily Situation Reports (1-30 Jan 1990)," USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 26 **Reserve CA elements began to deploy to Panama in early January 1990. Activating and mobilizing them through USASOC, while rapid, meant that they could not deploy as fast as active-duty units.**
 - 27 Cheek interview, 2 December 2019.
 - 28 COL William W. Graham, "Situation Report=DC Team=1700, 6 Jan-1700, 7 Jan," 7 January 1990.
 - 29 COL William W. Graham, "Situation Report=DC Team=1700, 7 Jan-1700, 8 Jan," 8 January 1990, copy in Folder "After Action Report-Operation JUST CAUSE (Panama) includes Daily Situation Reports (1-30 Jan 1990)," USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 30 Cheek interview, 2 December 2019; Cheek interview, 19 January 2018.
 - 31 COL William W. Graham, "Situation Report=DC Team=1700, 9 Jan-1700, 10 Jan," 10 January 1990.
 - 32 Cheek interview, 2 December 2019; Cheek interview, 19 January 2018.
 - 33 COL William W. Graham, "Situation Report=DC Team=1700, 10 Jan-1700, 11 Jan," 11 January 1990, copy in Folder "After Action Report-Operation JUST CAUSE (Panama) includes Daily Situation Reports (1-30 Jan 1990)," USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 34 "Civil Affairs Sitrep 14," 12 January 1990, copy in Folder "After Action Report-Operation JUST CAUSE (Panama) includes Daily Situation Reports (1-30 Jan 1990)," USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 35 COL William W. Graham, "Situation Report=DC Team=1700, 10 Jan-1700, 11 Jan," 11 January 1990.
 - 36 COL William W. Graham, "Situation Report=DC Team=1700, 12 Jan-1700, 13 Jan," 13 January 1990, copy in Folder "After Action Report-Operation JUST CAUSE (Panama) includes Daily Situation Reports (1-30 Jan 1990)," USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC. **COL Graham and elements of the 361st controlled the facility until 19 January, when the facility became the responsibility of USAID and the Panamanian Red Cross.** COL Kenneth D. Strong, "Civil Affairs After Action Report-Operation JUST CAUSE," 1990, copy in Folder "Civil Affairs After Action Report-Operation Just Cause-Panama, 361st CA Brigade-1 Jan-28 Feb 1990," USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 37 Cheek interview, 2 December 2019.
 - 38 Cheek interview, 2 December 2019.

Displaced civilians are shown to their housing cubicles on 13 January 1990. Through the open hangar door are some of the GP Medium tents used to house single males.





SPREADING THE WORD FAST

by Jared M. Tracy

PSYOP in Operation JUST CAUSE

Abstract: When Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama began on 20 December 1989, loudspeaker teams from the 4th Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Group accompanied invasion forces. Days later, they were reinforced by a PSYOP Task Force (POTF), which expanded the PSYOP effort. Together, PSYOP soldiers helped reduce casualties, garnered Panamanian support for U.S. forces and the new government, and promoted the successful ‘guns for money’ program.

On CBS *Evening News* on 1 January 1990, anchorman Dan Rather displayed aerial imagery of the Papal Nunciature in Panama City, Panama, the hideout of dictator Manuel Noriega. After showing U.S. military roadblocks, Rather pointed to another spot, saying, “Over here . . . is a speaker system through which statements by President [George H.W.] Bush and rock music are being pumped out on a 24-hour-a-day basis as part of a psychological pressure that the U.S. wants to keep drumming into Noriega inside that compound.”¹ This “pressure” being applied by soldiers from the 1st Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Battalion, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, was part of a broader PSYOP effort during Operation JUST CAUSE.

This article details PSYOP in Panama from 20 December 1989 through mid-January 1990. First, it explains pre-conflict PSYOP preparations, including the development of print, audio, and visual products, and plans for a PSYOP Task Force (POTF). Second, it summarizes the role of tactical loudspeaker teams in combat operations on and after D-Day. Third, it describes the arrival of 4th PSYOP Group (POG) (-) and the POTF

on D+4, and the ensuing multifaceted PSYOP effort through January 1990. Finally, it summarizes PSYOP output, impact, and lessons learned, and concludes that it made key contributions to the U.S. mission in Panama.

Preparations

PSYOP planning began long before JUST CAUSE, the mission to remove Noriega, the Panama Defense Forces (PDF), and Dignity Battalion (DIGBAT) paramilitary squads, and help restore a democratic government. The commander of the U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM)-aligned 1st PSYOP Battalion (POB), Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Dennis P. Walko, knew key players on the USSOUTHCOM and U.S. Army South (USARSO) staffs. He had also previously worked for Lieutenant General (LTG) Carl W. Stiner, Commanding General, XVIII Airborne Corps and, later, Joint Task Force (JTF) – South, during JUST CAUSE. The 4th POG commander, Colonel (COL) Anthony H. Normand, also had a positive relationship with XVIII Airborne Corps. Walko stated in hindsight that “liaison between us and USSOUTHCOM [and] XVIII Airborne Corps was

“Over here...is a speaker system through which statements by President Bush and rock music are being pumped out on a 24-hour-a-day basis as part of a psychological pressure that the U.S. wants to keep drumming into Noriega inside that compound.”

— Dan Rather, *CBS Evening News*

A 450-watt AN/UIH-6A loudspeaker mounted on a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV), as used outside of the Papal Nunciature.



Previous Page: Panamanians celebrate U.S. efforts to remove dictator Manuel Noriega and reinstate a democratic government during Operation JUST CAUSE.



Left: The removal of Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega, his so-called Dignity Battalion paramilitary squads, and the Panama Defense Forces, was the central focus of Operation JUST CAUSE. **Middle:** During Operation JUST CAUSE, LTG Carl W. Stiner (pictured here as the four-star Commanding General, U.S. Special Operations Command) commanded JTF-South, the higher headquarters of the POTF. **Right:** LTC Dennis P. Walko, Commander, 1st PSYOP Battalion and PSYOP Task Force (POTF).

extremely easy.”² PSYOP was thus plugged into Panama contingency planning early on, correcting a noted failure from Operation URGENT FURY in Grenada in 1983.³

According to Walko, “Various prepackaged PSYOP materials—pre-recorded TV, radio, and loudspeaker tapes, radio and loudspeaker scripts, music, and designs for printed leaflets and posters—were developed from 1987 to 1989.”⁴ The possibility of American intervention increased and 4th POG preparations accelerated once Noriega nullified the May 1989 elections, a PDF coup in October failed, and U.S. civilians and service-members in Panama faced heightened hostility. The priority in contingency planning was fielding enough loudspeaker teams to support a corps-sized operation. Unfortunately, 1st POB did not have enough soldiers to meet this requirement.⁵

As a solution, 4th POG tasked 6th, 8th, and 9th POBs to provide additional soldiers so that each combat battalion would have at least one attached two-man team armed with a 250-watt AN/UIH-6 man-pack loudspeaker system.⁶ According to Major (MAJ) Robert W. Caspers, 8th POB Executive Officer, the battalion’s “loudspeaker assets [were] the most likely portion of the unit to be utilized during this operation.” The 8th POB had “both the people and the equipment [man-packed and vehicular loudspeaker systems] ready to move on a relatively short notice to anywhere.”⁷ The lack of Spanish language capability in the other PSYOP battalions would be offset by the use of surrender appeals pre-recorded on cassette tapes.

As 1st POB commander, LTC Walko was slated to head a POTF in Panama, although the POTF main body would not arrive until D+4. Eventually located at Corozal near Albrook Air Base (but with Walko

just north at Fort Clayton), the POTF would be comprised of soldiers from across the 4th POG serving in loudspeaker teams, as staff, and as Liaison Officers (LNOs); the 1st POB Propaganda Development Center (PDC); two print sections; and soldiers from the 90th Strategic Dissemination Company (SDC), to run the Transportable AM Transmitter – 10 kw (TAMT-10) station near Corozal. Upon arrival, the POTF was to provide command and control of PSYOP elements, develop and disseminate PSYOP products, and advise the JTF-South commander.⁸

These plans notwithstanding, the actual PSYOP footprint in Panama on D-Day was meager. It initially consisted only of LTC Walko and a small staff; a 1st POB loudspeaker detachment of five teams (which had been in Panama since May); and the 90th SDC broadcast team.⁹ Based on LTG Stiner’s directive that PSYOP soldiers would accompany U.S.-based assault forces for the invasion, tentative plans called for the following disposition of Loudspeaker Teams:

- ▶ 3 for TF RED-Tango (1/75th Ranger Regiment [+]);
- ▶ 3 for TF RED-Romeo (2/75th Ranger Regiment [+]);
- ▶ 9 for TF PACIFIC (HQ, 82nd Airborne Division [ABD]; 1st Brigade, 82nd ABD [+]);
- ▶ 1 for TF WHITE (SEAL Team 4);
- ▶ 1 for TF GATOR (4th Battalion, 6th Mechanized Infantry Regiment [+]);
- ▶ 1 for TF BLACK (3-7th Special Forces Group [+]);
- ▶ 1 for a Special Operations team.

U.S.-based loudspeaker teams could be and were shuffled around until the last minute, depending upon mission requirements. 1st POB teams already present in Panama were allotted to in-country forces.¹⁰

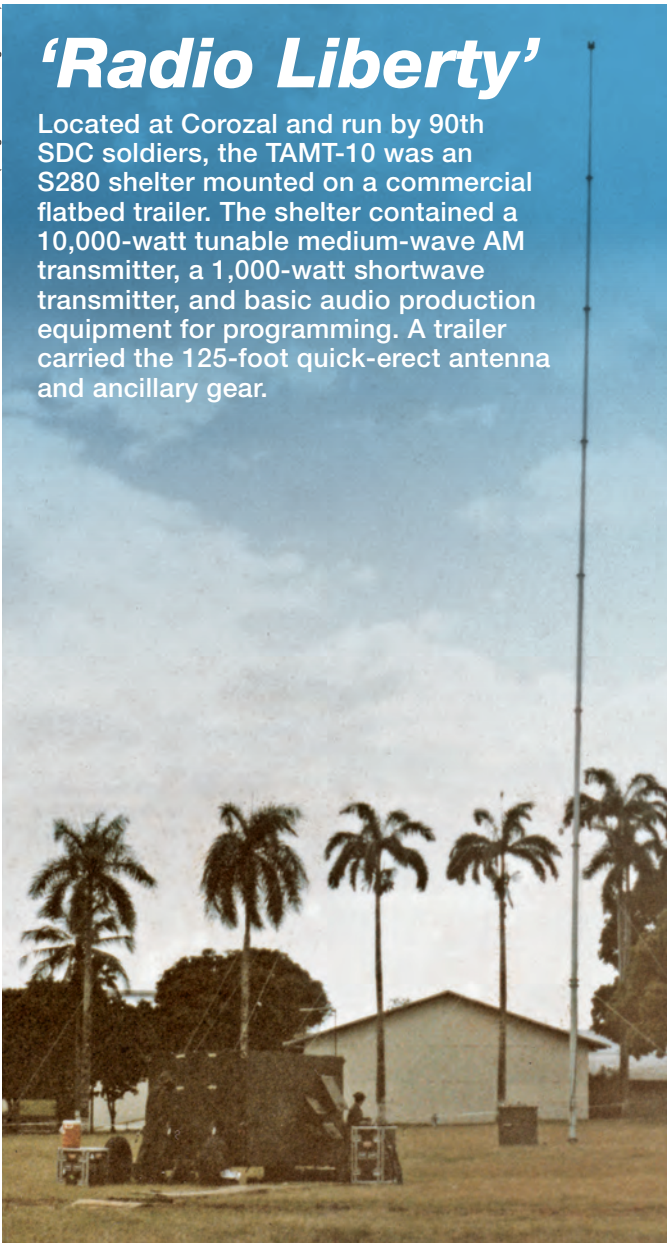


Left: Artist's rendition of tactical loudspeaker support to the TF RED-Tango airborne assault on Torrijos-Tocumen. **Right:** A silhouetted PDF soldier surrenders after hearing a loudspeaker appeal during the early hours of JUST CAUSE.

(image credit: Doug Elwell)

'Radio Liberty'

Located at Corozal and run by 90th SDC soldiers, the TAMT-10 was an S280 shelter mounted on a commercial flatbed trailer. The shelter contained a 10,000-watt tunable medium-wave AM transmitter, a 1,000-watt shortwave transmitter, and basic audio production equipment for programming. A trailer carried the 125-foot quick-erect antenna and ancillary gear.



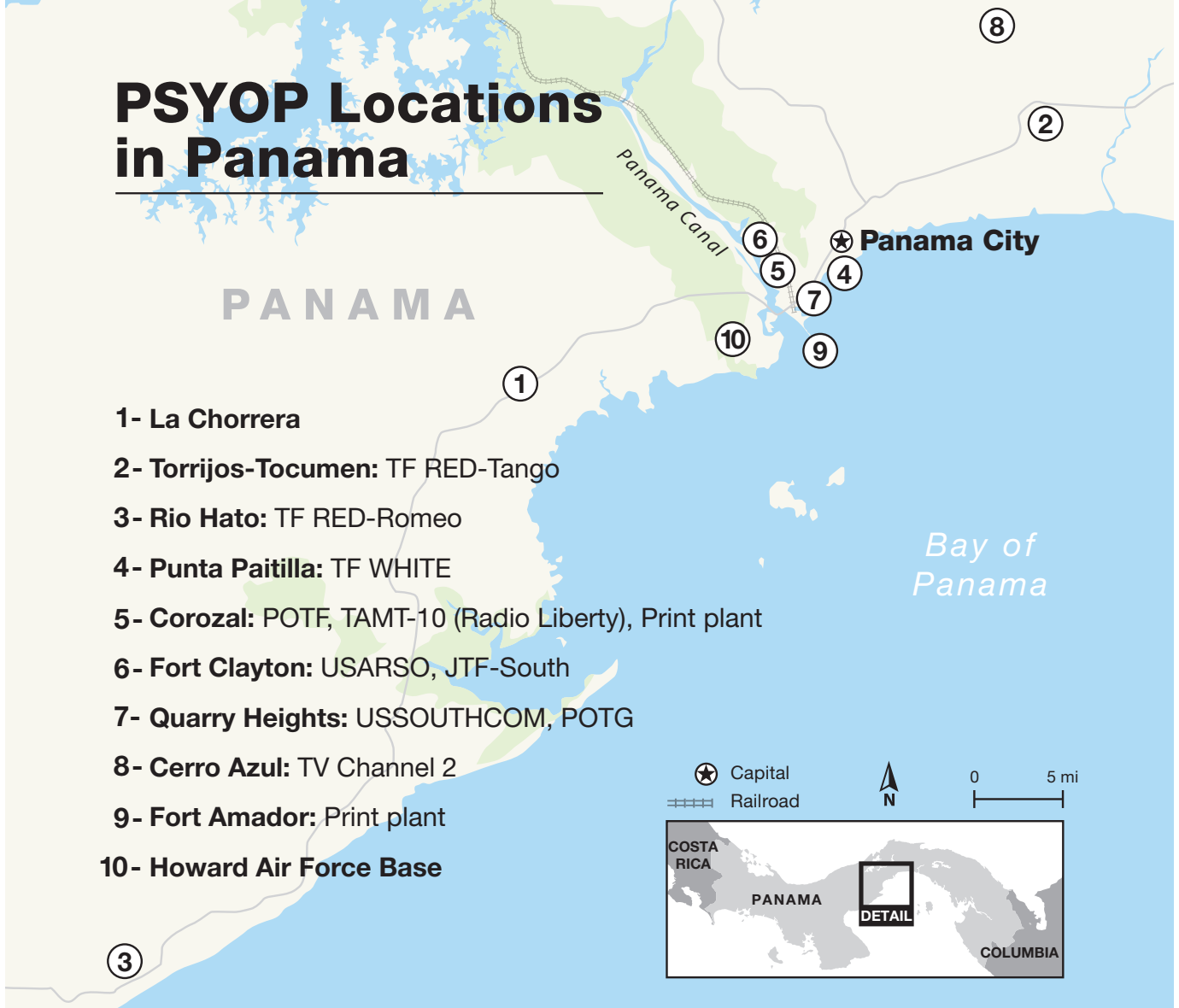
Operations

When JUST CAUSE began at 0100 hours on 20 December 1989, approximately forty 4th POG soldiers joined invasion forces as planned, providing loudspeaker and linguistic support to their supported units.¹¹ By the end of D-Day, there were 66 personnel from 4th POG in Panama.¹² For several days, loudspeaker teams continued to support combat and clearing operations. According to one loudspeaker operator, "We would . . . roll up with a rifle company. I'd get with the company commander, and we would decide that we were going to broadcast into the house to try and clear out innocents before we would hit it. In three or four cases, we [got] 50 or 60 people out of a house before the troops went in and cleared it."¹³

Loudspeaker teams were complemented by pre-taped messages broadcasted on Panamanian TV Channel 2 from EC-130E VOLANT SOLO aircraft of the 193rd Special Operations Group (SOG), Pennsylvania Air National Guard. Days into JUST CAUSE, broadcasting resumed from the station itself at Cerro Azul, near Panama City, after members of 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group, had secured it and the situation had stabilized.¹⁴ There were also radio broadcasts emanating from the TAMT-10 in Corozal, which became known as Radio Liberty. According to one 90th SDC soldier, "We had to operate 24 hours a day for the first four days before had gotten reinforcements. During that period, we [got] little if any sleep at all."¹⁵ Loudspeaker broadcasts, VOLANT SOLO, and Radio Liberty comprised the bulk of the round-the-clock PSYOP effort until the POTF main body arrived on 24-25 December 1989.¹⁶

Also deploying was 4th POG commander, COL Normand, and key staff, who formed the theater-level PSYOP Task Group (POTG). Collocated with USSOUTHCOM at Quarry Heights, a couple miles

PSYOP Locations in Panama



Left: COL Anthony H. Normand, Commander, 4th PSYOP Group and PSYOP Task Group (POTG).

Right: General Maxwell R. Thurman, Commanding General, USSOUTHCOM, to which the POTG was assigned.



(image credit: NAFPA)

south of Corozal, the POTG ensured PSYOP policy compliance, reviewed POTF products, provided ‘as-needed’ support to the POTF, and advised the USSOUTHCOM Commander, General (GEN) Maxwell R. Thurman.¹⁷ This was the first attempt at a new deployment model in which the POG commander became the theater PSYOP officer, while a regional battalion formed the core of a JTF-level POTF.

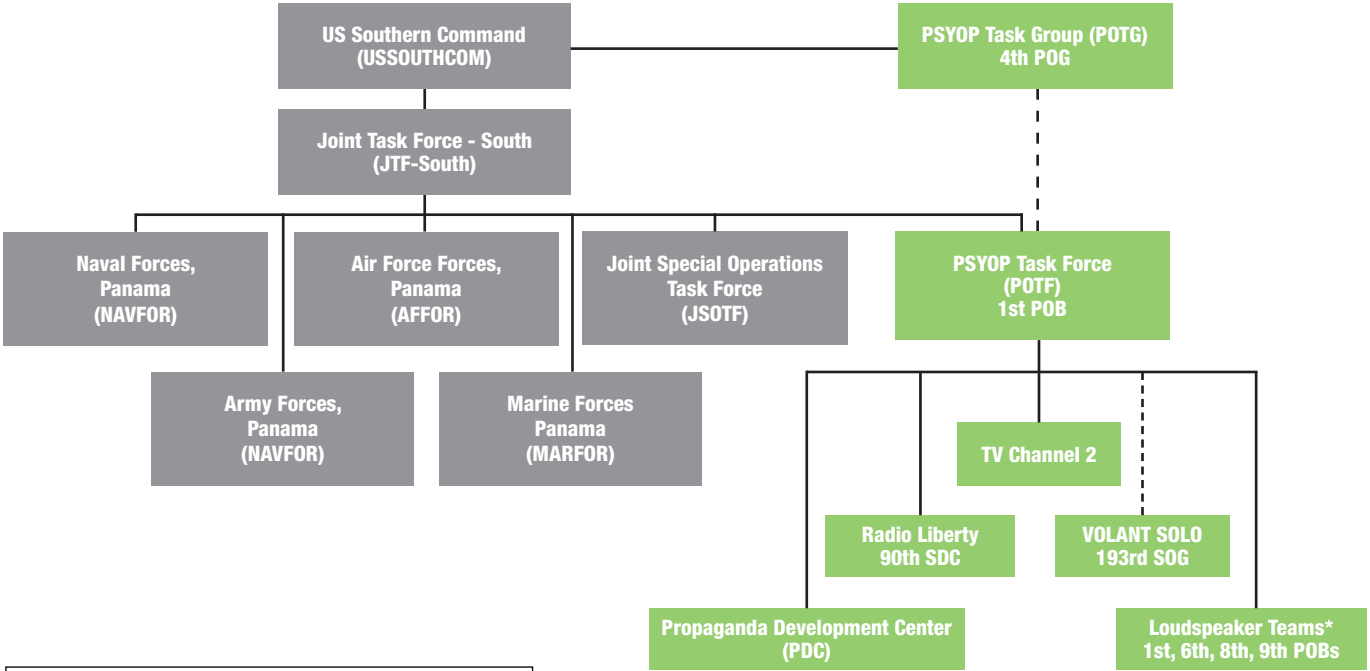
Into January 1990, PSYOP forces used various

printed, audio, and visual media to support ongoing military objectives. First, they delivered news and health and welfare information to Panamanians, to include locations of food distribution and medical treatment centers. Second, they continued to urge the surrender of Noriega and his supporters, including former DIGBAT members. “[I]f somebody was holed up in a house . . . [we] would use [the loudspeaker] to talk them out,” according to First Lieutenant (1LT) Robert E. Gagnon,



Left: A PSYOP soldier prepares to broadcast information to Panamanian civilians. **Right:** A leaflet titled “It’s Your Duty” informs readers of the monetary rewards for weapons, if they turn them over to U.S. forces.

PSYOP Organization During Operation JUST CAUSE



Operational Command _____

Coordination - - - - -

*Loudspeaker teams were assigned to the POTF but tactically controlled by their supported combat elements.

an 8th POB loudspeaker detachment commander. Third, they provided reasons for the U.S. intervention, assuring Panamanians that the U.S. “would leave as soon as possible.” Fourth, they promoted the weapons turn-in program. “[W]e would broadcast information on . . . where they could turn in the weapons and receive their money for payment,” said Gagnon.¹⁸ Finally, they worked to enhance the credibility of the new President Guillermo Endara government.

Multifaceted Support

With pre-fabricated products in-hand, PSYOP soldiers quickly transitioned to ‘on the spot’ broadcasts and original products. For example, LTC Walko recalled that the POTF “was heavily involved in preparing scripts and acquiring news items and music adequate to keep the Panama City area receiving VOLANT SOLO’s broadcasts and the nationwide audience receiving the AM radio station’s broadcasts 24 hours per day.” Print products were originally produced at the U.S. military print plant at Corozal, and later at Fort Amador. These highly sought-after items were disseminated via pick-up trucks, helicopters, and by hand.¹⁹

Products originated at the Propaganda Development Center (PDC) in the POTF. Its mission was to “develop, produce, and disseminate multi-media [PSYOP] in the Republic of Panama.” Commanded by a major, the PDC had around 45 officers and soldiers organized into seven sections: Command Group, Print, Radio, TV, Face-to-Face, Information Collection/LNOs, and an ad hoc planning section called Cell A. Its overarching objectives were enhancing “popular support and legitimacy of the Government of Panama” and discrediting “Noriega loyalists, [DIGBATs], and criminal elements.” Among its products around the New Year were the *Nueva Republica* newspaper; weapons turn-in leaflets for the 82nd Airborne Division, 7th Infantry Division, and 75th Ranger Regiment; special bulletins; and 30-minute radio programs broadcasted three times weekly.²⁰

The most well-known PSYOP episode during JUST CAUSE occurred at the Papal Nunciature, where Noriega hid from 24 December 1989 until 3 January 1990. First, the PDC organized a prayer vigil about the event. Then, LTG Stiner (with Thurman’s approval) ordered a PSYOP-led “sound barrier” around the Nunciature after Christmas to prevent media eavesdropping on negotiations between MG Marc A. Cisneros, Commander, USARSO, and José Sebastián Laboa, the Papal Nuncio (Vatican diplomatic representative). Deafening, round-the-clock music from cassette tapes and local radio stations blared through 450-watt loudspeakers mounted on HMMWVs.



Top: A soldier makes a radio broadcast from Corozal. **Middle:** The inside of Panamanian TV Channel 2, from which U.S. forces broadcasted programs until the station was turned over to vetted Panamanian media operators. **Bottom:** A lithographer prints out products for widespread distribution.

Harassing Noriega was of ancillary benefit. While effective, that practice sparked criticism from diplomats, the media, U.S. citizens, and even Laboa himself. With the issue becoming increasingly uncomfortable for U.S. President George H.W. Bush, GEN Colin L. Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, directed Thurman to stop the music on 29 December. Though highly publicized in the international media, this was but a fraction of the overall PSYOP effort.²¹

The scope of the PSYOP effort in Panama belied the relatively low number of 4th POG soldiers in JUST CAUSE, which peaked at around 250 in late 1989. PSYOP units also utilized fluent Spanish speakers, some from the 4th POG and others from supported units.²² Equipment used by PSYOP soldiers while in Panama included the TAMT-10 station; twenty-three 250-watt loudspeaker systems, thirteen 450-watt loudspeaker systems, and two 900-watt loudspeaker systems; and two light print plants, each mounted on a M35A2 truck inside an ES-38 or ES-82A shelter and powered by a PU-406 trailer-mounted generator. PSYOP-owned vehicles included fourteen HMMWVs, and ten M1008 and M1009 Commercial Utility Cargo Vehicles (CUCVs).²³ After the New Year, PSYOP soldiers spread throughout Panama began consolidating at Corozal for re-deployment. On 10 January 1990, there were 207 personnel from PSYOP units in-country; that number decreased greatly throughout the month.²⁴

Output

PSYOP output between 20 December 1989 and 8 January 1990 was significant. The POTF produced and

distributed a million leaflets and handbills, 50,000 posters, over half a million newspapers (*Perspectivas* and *Nueva Republica*), and 125,000 units of various other print products (including posters, receipts for weapons, and ID cards).²⁵ The free PSYOP-printed newspapers were so popular that they were being sold by Panamanians on the streets.²⁶ Additional PSYOP efforts included ongoing tactical loudspeaker support, TV messaging, and 24-hour AM radio broadcasts.²⁷ An estimated 70 percent of the Panamanian population had tuned into Radio Liberty programming, which was, according to COL Normand, “quite remarkable. It proved the credibility we had with the Panamanian people, and [the] efficacy of our broadcasting efforts. They were relying on us for their information [that] they knew they could trust.”²⁸

Perhaps most important were face-to-face interactions, which helped personalize the U.S. presence to Panamanians. One PSYOP soldier recalled fondly that the Panamanians were genuinely “happy that we were there. They would come out, shake our hands, give us free Coca-Colas, food, [etc.]. These were poor people who did not have a lot themselves, but they would give us whatever they had because they were happy to see us [and] that we had liberated them from Manuel Noriega.”²⁹ Perhaps more than PSYOP products themselves, these personal interactions had helped shape Panamanian attitudes toward the overall U.S. operation.

When the focus fully shifted from combat to stability operations (PROMOTE LIBERTY) in mid-January, the POTF was replaced by a 48-person PSYOP Support Element (PSE). Commanded by 8th POB commander, LTC Jeffrey B. Jones, and mostly comprised of 8th POB soldiers supported by 1st POB linguists and 90th SDC



(Image credit: NARA)

Above: MG Marc A. Cisneros, Commanding General, USARSO, was involved in negotiations at the Papal Nunciature in Panama City, where outside a 1st POB mounted loudspeaker team blared loud music.

Right: Manuel Noriega is escorted by U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency personnel aboard an aircraft at Howard Air Force Base, Panama, after turning himself over on 3 January 1990.



(Image credit: NARA)



Front pages of the *Neuva Republica* (30 December 1989) and *Perspectivas* (25 December 1989) newspapers.

augmentees, PSE efforts included legitimizing the new Panamanian Police Force and Public Force; promoting the Endara government; and countering propaganda from Endara’s opponents. As the world’s attention shifted to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in mid-1990, Panama became a sideshow. Drawing down throughout 1990, the PSE was officially dissolved in March 1991.³⁰

Impact

There were many indicators of PSYOP impact during JUST CAUSE.³¹ First, it was credited with reduced casualties on both sides. For example, early in the operation, U.S. Marines encountered heavy PDF/DIGBAT resistance around La Chorrera. During an overnight ceasefire, the attached loudspeaker team broadcasted surrender appeals and aircraft dropped 20,000 leaflets. “Resistance ceased early the next morning without an additional shot being fired,” recalled Walko.³²

Similar events happened elsewhere. “I don’t want to blow my own horn,” said SGT Javier R. Ramirez, who supported TF RED-Tango, “but I think we saved more lives by being there.”³³ According to MAJ Caspers, “[O]nce the loudspeakers were on the ground and had shown themselves to be effective at reducing the level of resistance met, nobody wanted to . . . turn loose of them . . . [They] played very significant roles in . . . diminishing casualties on both sides.”³⁴ It had not just reduced military casualties, but civilian casualties as well. COL Normand was “personally convinced that the civilian casualty toll would have been significantly higher had we not had [PSYOP soldiers] spread out . . . to keep civilians out of the line of fire.”³⁵

A second impact indicator was high Panamanian support for the U.S. intervention and the new government. For example, by 29 December 1989, 76 percent of Panamanians polled saw U.S. forces as liberators; 88



Top: Face-to-face engagements with the Panamanian population assured civilians of U.S. goodwill in Panama. **Middle:** U.S. Marines engaged with enemy forces at La Chorrera allow U.S. Army PSYOP soldiers to make surrender appeals via a tactical loudspeaker. **Bottom:** Enemy combatants who surrendered to U.S. Marines near La Chorrera.

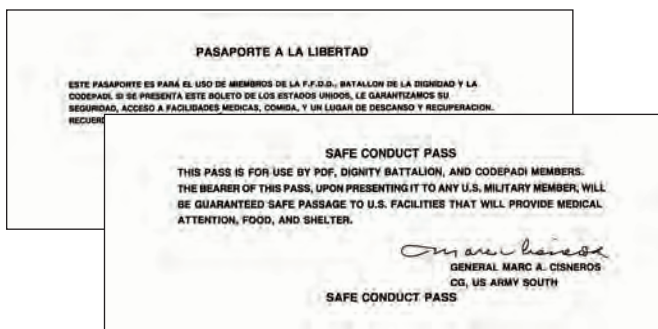
percent wanted U.S. forces to remain; 90 percent felt that Panama would improve; 95 percent viewed Endara as the legitimate president; and 88 percent approved of Noreiga being tried in the U.S.³⁶ “To see what was happening in that country,” Normand recalled, “and to be a part of changing that and to feel the electricity in the air when you talk[ed] with the Panamanian people, it was something that words don’t express.”³⁷ A third measure of effectiveness was 8,848 weapons turned in through the PSYOP-advertised ‘weapons for cash’ program. According to SGT Joel L. Villa, another loudspeaker operator, the Panamanians “seemed to respond to it pretty well. Especially when they see \$125 being waved in front of them . . . just for bringing a rifle in. Word spread fast.”³⁸

Finally, thanks to PSYOP support, there were reduced anxieties among Displaced Civilians (DCs) temporarily sheltered at Balboa High School. One 1st POB loudspeaker team worked full-time in the compound, broadcasting messages, handing out newspapers, pre-testing products, talking with people, and reporting problems to camp administrators from the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion. According to Walko, “By building rapport and establishing information programs with the [DCs] over time, PSYOP soldiers established their credibility and were able to neutralize rumors before they expanded to crisis proportion.” Once an improved DC facility was constructed at Albrook Air Base, “PSYOP soldiers helped prepare the population of the Balboa camp to minimize apprehension about the move to the new site and to enhance control during the move itself.”³⁹

Lessons Learned

Several PSYOP lessons arose from JUST CAUSE. First, soldiers were well-prepared because PSYOP had been fully integrated into the theater campaign plan, and enjoyed senior-level support from the chain of command.⁴⁰ Second, because the POTF main body took longer than expected to arrive in Panama due to delayed deployment orders, the “full capabilities of PSYOP could not be brought to bear until D+4 of Operation JUST CAUSE.” A lessons learned report recommended that, in the future, all necessary PSYOP elements must “arrive in the AO early in the deployment.”⁴¹

And third, pre-fabricated products received praise in post-conflict lessons learned reports. For example, “Loudspeaker teams equipped with pre-recorded tapes and bilingual script booklets contributed significantly to the success of the combat assault and [consolidation] phase of JUST CAUSE.”⁴² However, input from the field about pre-made products was less glowing. According to 1LT Gagnon, “Of the . . . [pre-recorded] tapes, we didn’t use any of them.”⁴³ SGT Ramirez said, “We were



Above: Examples of a Safe Conduct Pass dropped on PDF and DIGBAT personnel.



Left: A leaflet entitled “Democracy at Last” highlights the legitimacy of the new President Endara government.

given some tapes to be used in surrender appeals, tapes to control the civilians. We never used them.”⁴⁴ SGT Villa stated pointedly, “They were just extra weight.”⁴⁵

These critiques notwithstanding, PSYOP contributed to U.S. victory in JUST CAUSE. The 4th POG and its battalions were integrated into contingency planning long before the invasion, allowing for the development of multi-media products in advance. In-country and U.S.-based PSYOP forces supported combat operations until the D+4 arrival of the POTF main body, which was in turn bolstered by the theater-level POTG. Through January, PSYOP provided the U.S. and its Panamanian allies with a voice to speak to the people via print, audio, and visual products. According to Walko, PSYOP in Panama was widely viewed “as both cost effective and critical to success.”⁴⁶ At the ground level, SGT Todd said, “We did a good job. We fulfilled our mission or [even] far [past] the mission we were initially told to do.”⁴⁷ 🇺🇸

Takeaways:

- 1** Early integration of PSYOP into contingency planning proved critical to its effectiveness in Operation JUST CAUSE.
- 2** Although the POTF main body did not arrive until D+4, PSYOP forces were adequately manned, equipped, and employed throughout JUST CAUSE.
- 3** PSYOP in JUST CAUSE provided an invaluable dress rehearsal for Operations DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM, particularly for 4th POG leadership and 8th POB soldiers.

Endnotes

- 1 **Quotation from** Dan Rather, *CBS Evening News*, 1 January 1990, excerpted in untitled/undated 4th Psychological Operations Group (POG) video on PSYOP in Panama, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter 4th POG video.
- 2 4th POG video.
- 3 Carnes Lord, Thomas C. Ayers, John R. Brinkerhoff, Thomas Lee, Kurt E. Muller, Alfred H. Paddock, and Dennis J. Quinn, *PSYOP At War: The Management of Strategic Information in Panama and the Persian Gulf* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1993), 12; Dennis P. Walko, "Psychological Operations in Panama during Operations JUST CAUSE and PROMOTE LIBERTY," in Frank L. Goldstein, ed., *Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 1996), 252.
- 4 Walko, "Psychological Operations in Panama," 252.
- 5 **The 1st POB was organized under the modified Table of Organization and Equipment 33500H0 (originally dated September 1970), and functioned according to the 1987 Army Field Manual 33-1: Psychological Operations.** Email from Jennifer A. Nichols to Jared M. Tracy, "SUBJECT: Operation JUST CAUSE RFIS, Monday AM," 10 April 2019, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC; Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), "T/O&E 33-500H," 28 September 1970, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Fort McNair, Washington, DC; HQDA, FM 33-1: *Psychological Operations* (Washington, DC: HQDA, 1987).
- 6 Jared M. Tracy, "A Tale of Two Teams: Tactical PSYOP Loudspeaker Support in Panama," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 15:1 (2019): 41-42. **The 250-watt AN/UIH-6 loudspeaker was 40.9" length x 25.9" width x 40" height in dimension, approximately 60 pounds in weight, was carried like a backpack, and had an average audible range of 500 to 1000 meters, depending upon terrain. It had two bullhorn-like speakers, a detached amplifier, and a microphone with a twenty-foot cord. The basic features and operation of the 450-watt AN/UIH-6A loudspeaker were the same, except it had a slightly stronger amplifier, four bull-horn speakers instead of two, and was vehicle-mountable.**
- 7 MAJ Robert W. Caspers, interview with MAJ Robert P. Cook, 13 April 1990, <https://history.army.mil/documents/panama/JCIT/JCIT68.htm>.
- 8 Briefing, "Psychological Operations Support to Operation JUST CAUSE," 14 March 1990, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Briefing, "PSYOP Support to JUST CAUSE."
- 9 Walko, "Psychological Operations in Panama," 253, 256.
- 10 Tracy, "A Tale of Two Teams," 41-42; 4th POG, JULLS Report, "Loudspeaker Teams," 21 March 1990, Folder "USSOCOM/JSOTF AAR, 16 MAR 1990," Box 22, Lawrence A. Yates Collection, Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS.
- 11 **For details about loudspeaker team operations on D-Day through D+4, see** Tracy, "A Tale of Two Teams," 38-51; Caspers interview, 13 April 1990; SGTs Javier R. Ramirez, Raymond L. Todd, and Joel L. Villa, interview with SSG Gerry Albin, 10 April 1990, <https://history.army.mil/documents/panama/JCIT/JCIT65.htm>; and 1LT Robert E. Gagnon, interview with MAJ Robert P. Cook, 5 April 1990, <https://history.army.mil/documents/panama/JCIT/JCIT70.htm>.
- 12 1st SOCOM to USASOC, SITREP, 20 December 1989, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC. **These 66 personnel included four loudspeaker teams with TF RED-Tango at Tocumen, two with TF RED-Romeo at Rio Hato, two with TF WHITE, and thirteen with various units around Panama City.**
- 13 4th POG video.
- 14 Stanley Sandler, *To Free From Oppression: A Concise History of U.S. Army Special Forces, Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations, and the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School* (Fort Bragg, NC: USASOC, 1994), 98.
- 15 4th POG video.
- 16 1st SOCOM to USASOC, SITREPs, 24 and 25 December 1989, copies in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC; Walko, "Psychological Operations in Panama," 257.
- 17 Briefing, "PSYOP Support to JUST CAUSE."
- 18 Gagnon interview, 5 April 1990.
- 19 Walko, "Psychological Operations in Panama," 258.
- 20 1st POB, "1st PSYOP Bn (Abn) Product Development and Dissemination Center," no date, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 21 Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (OCJCS), *Operation JUST CAUSE: The Planning and Execution of Joint Operations in Panama, February 1988 – January 1990* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, OCJCS, 1995), 59-60; LTG Michael P.C. Carnes, The Joint Staff, Memorandum for the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs), "SUBJECT: Congressional Inquiries Regarding U.S. Operations in Panama," Folder "Congressional on Loud Music and Nicaraguan Embassy Search," Box 20, Yates Collection.
- 22 Caspers interview, 13 April 1990; Gagnon interview, 5 April 1990.
- 23 1st SOCOM to USASOC, SITREP, 1 January 1990, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 24 Deployment Chart, "ARSOF SUPCOM Deployments to JTF South," 10 January 1990, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC. **This number broke down as follows: 11 officers and soldiers from HHC, 4th POG; 11 soldiers from the 90th SDG; 114 officers and soldiers from 1st POB; 31 officers and soldiers from 6th POB; 23 officers and soldiers from 8th POB; and 17 soldiers from 9th POB.**
- 25 PSYOP product dissemination statistics, 4 January 1990, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC; Walko, "Psychological Operations in Panama," 249.
- 26 4th POG video.
- 27 Walko, "Psychological Operations in Panama," 249.
- 28 4th POG video.
- 29 4th POG video.
- 30 Walko, "Psychological Operations in Panama," 270-272.
- 31 4th POG, JULLS Report, "Loudspeaker Teams," 14 March 1990, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC; Briefing, "US CINCSO OPORD (BLUE SPOON)," no date, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter US CINCSO OPORD (BLUE SPOON) Briefing; PAO, USSOUTHCOM, Fact Sheet, "Panama Today: U.S. Southern Command's Operation PROMOTE LIBERTY," 17 June 1991, Folder "Rules of Engagement—PROMOTE LIBERTY," Box 17, Yates Collection; PSYOP Activities, 6 January 1990, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 32 Walko, "Psychological Operations in Panama," 260.
- 33 Ramirez, Todd, and Villa interview, 10 April 1990.
- 34 Caspers interview, 13 April 1990.
- 35 4th POG video.
- 36 US CINCSO OPORD (BLUE SPOON) Briefing.
- 37 4th POG video.
- 38 Ramirez, Todd, and Villa interview, 10 April 1990.
- 39 Walko, "Psychological Operations in Panama," 261.
- 40 Briefing, "PSYOP Support to JUST CAUSE."
- 41 JULLS Report, "Loudspeaker Teams."
- 42 4th POG, JULLS Report, "Loudspeaker Teams," 21 March 1990, Folder "USSOCOM/JSOTF AAR, 16 MAR 1990," Box 22, Yates Collection.
- 43 Gagnon interview, 5 April 1990.
- 44 Ramirez, Todd, and Villa interview, 10 April 1990.
- 45 Ramirez, Todd, and Villa interview, 10 April 1990.
- 46 Walko, "Psychological Operations in Panama," 270.
- 47 Ramirez, Todd, and Villa interview, 10 April 1990.



RISING FROM THE ASHES

PSYOP in Operation DESERT SHIELD, Part 1

by Jared M. Tracy

Abstract: Like much of the U.S. Army, Psychological Operations (PSYOP) had been shaking off the post-Vietnam malaise prior to Operation DESERT SHIELD. Less than a year removed from U.S. operations against Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega, Iraq's attack on Kuwait in August 1990 was a jolt that helped PSYOP rise from the ashes and claim its rightful place in the Army arsenal. This success did not come without challenges in the pre-conflict phase.

Fueled by media images of Iraqi soldiers surrendering by the thousands, U.S. Army Psychological Operations (PSYOP) during the Persian Gulf War has been heralded as a success. What the public did not see, however, was the work getting the massive PSYOP infrastructure in place to wage that concerted campaign of influencing enemy soldiers to defect or surrender. For starters, the near-crippling delay in theater PSYOP plan approval during Operation DESERT SHIELD (August 1990 – January 1991) might have knocked PSYOP out of the fight before the war began. That disaster was averted thanks to improvements in PSYOP training, equipment, and capabilities in the preceding years; the adaptability of PSYOP leaders and soldiers on the ground; the recent combat experience of Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama; and the habitual relationships that 8th PSYOP Battalion (POB) had built with partners in the region.

This article provides necessary historical context for the successful PSYOP effort in Operation DESERT STORM (January – February 1991). In particular, it details the state of PSYOP from the immediate post-Vietnam era through Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait; the coalition buildup in Saudi Arabia during Operation DESERT SHIELD; and the frustrating but ultimately successful effort to get a viable PSYOP plan approved for the impending conflict. It sets the stage for future articles on PSYOP force deployments, operations, and accomplishments before and during Operation DESERT STORM. The story begins with PSYOP after Vietnam.

(image credit: Army Magazine)



Captured Iraqi soldiers during Operation DESERT STORM, 1991.



(image credit: US ARMY)

The 2nd POG colors are cased at its inactivation ceremony at Fort Bragg, 13 September 1972.

PSYOP in the Post-Vietnam War Era

After the drawdown of U.S. forces from Vietnam in the early 1970s and the end of the war in 1975, PSYOP—like the U.S. Army as whole—fell into disrepair. Many PSYOP units were deactivated or transferred to the reserve component, including the 2nd and 7th PSYOP Groups (POGs). Remaining active-duty units were typically undermanned, poorly equipped, and not combat-ready. Still, several institutional measures in the 1980s kept PSYOP on life support. For example, on 26 July 1984, the Department of Defense (DoD) approved DoD Directive S-3321.1, “Overt Psychological Operations Conducted by the Military Services in Peacetime and in Contingencies Short of Declared War,” known simply as the Overt PSYOP Peacetime Plan (OP3). This document established “policy, provides procedures, and assigns responsibilities for the planning, development, programing, direction, execution, and control of overt PSYOP conducted by the DoD in peacetime” and in contingency operations.¹ OP3 was fine for peacetime planning but, as DESERT SHIELD later proved, it was not a good recipe for getting a theater PSYOP plan approved quickly or efficiently.

Despite giving PSYOP much-needed attention in



COL Jonathan W. Anderson, Jr., Director of the PSYOP School, COL William A. Hudson, 4th POG Commander, and Harris Peel, U.S. Information Agency, conduct an interview about PSYOP at Fort Bragg, soon after the Group's reactivation on 13 September 1972. 4th POG had been inactivated in late 1971 after spending roughly four years in Vietnam.

the Pentagon, OP3 had little impact at the unit level. Headquartered at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the 4th POG was the only active duty PSYOP Group. According to Colonel (COL) Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., former 4th POG commander (1979-1982) then serving as a senior PSYOP officer in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, "one active duty PSYOP organization consisting of a group headquarters, a radio section, and three battalions is insufficient to support all unified command

requirements in mid- or high-intensity conflict."² Further, the Group lacked personnel and serviceable equipment, its training was haphazard, and its readiness state was low. As later 4th POG commander COL Anthony H. Normand recalled, the



4th POG Distinctive Unit Insignia (DUI)

Group in the 1980s was in "atrophy as far as the capability to plan for and conduct [PSYOP]."³

Units saw little immediate improvement on the ground. However, additional DoD measures began to help PSYOP more directly. In 1984, President Ronald W. Reagan directed the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Caspar W. Weinberger to improve PSYOP units and capabilities. The next year, the SECDEF approved the DoD PSYOP Master Plan, which placed greater joint emphasis on military PSYOP.⁴ According to Paddock, the Master Plan would "serve as a comprehensive framework for the phased, fundamental revitalization and improvement of the department's capabilities to employ [PSYOP] effectively, worldwide, in support of national objectives in peace and crisis and at all levels of conflict."⁵ Conditions were slowly improving for U.S. Army PSYOP.

Assuming command of 4th POG from COL William A. DePalo, Jr., in December 1988, COL Normand sought to put key ideas from OP3 and the 1985 DoD PSYOP Master Plan into practice. First, he tested OP3 processes by integrating PSYOP into theater-level training exercises. Second, he tasked 4th POG civilian analysts with developing products that would be more useful for deploying PSYOP soldiers than rehashing encyclopedic country studies.⁶ Third, he developed a new deployment model in which the Group commander would integrate at the Unified Command level to become the senior theater PSYOP officer. The Group commander would develop theater PSYOP plans; conduct joint, interagency, and combined coordination; and bolster battalion-level PSYOP Task Forces (POTFs), which would execute the approved PSYOP campaign.⁷

The first proof-of-concept came during Operations JUST CAUSE and PROMOTE LIBERTY, the U.S. effort



President Ronald W. Reagan works in the Oval Office, 31 May 1985.

(image credit: NARA)



Left: Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger approved the 1985 PSYOP Master Plan, an example of renewed senior-level emphasis on military PSYOP in the mid-1980s.

Top Right: COL Anthony H. Normand commanded the 4th POG from 1988 to 1990, and was 'dual-hatted' as the Joint PSYOP Group commander during Operation DESERT SHIELD, 1990.

Bottom Right: With a reputation of repression and brutality, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein ordered his forces to invade Kuwait on 2 August 1990, even with his nation weakened after an eight-year war with Iran.



(image credit: US ARMY)



(image credit: PBS SoCal)

to remove Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega and then help restore a democratic government in Panama, in 1989-1991. Prior to JUST CAUSE, COL Normand handled much of the contingency planning with XVIII Airborne Corps (the core of Joint Task Force – South in Panama), along with Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Dennis P. Walko, commander of the U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM)-aligned 1st POB. However, once combat operations began, Normand assimilated into the USSOUTHCOM staff, while Walko led the POTF at JTF-South. JUST CAUSE allowed PSYOP “to go in and operate at the levels in which we could be most effective,” Normand said.⁸ As one report noted, “Numerous personnel with experience gained in [Panama] were available to provide expertise in planning, organizing, and supervising preparations for Operation DESERT STORM.”⁹ Panama was both a pilot for 4th POG’s new deployment model and a rehearsal for the larger PSYOP effort to come in the Middle East.

Background of DESERT SHIELD

Weakened and cash-strapped after a bloody eight-year war with Iran, on 17 July 1990, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein accused Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates of overproducing oil to further hurt Iraq. Hussein threatened to take measures against Kuwait, including military action, if it did not slow oil produc-

tion (there were also territorial disputes between Iraq and Kuwait). Hussein’s threats met with global condemnation. The U.S. reaffirmed its support of friendly Arab oil nations; Kuwait defended itself diplomatically throughout the region; and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries rejected Hussein’s production demands.¹⁰

Having positioned its forces along the border, Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August. It did not stop there. Baghdad declared Kuwait a province, built up and consolidated its forces, seemed poised to invade Saudi Arabia, and threatened to use weapons of mass destruction if necessary. On the eve of war in mid-January 1991, Iraq had five corps, roughly forty infantry, armor, and mechanized divisions, and 545,000 troops dedicated to the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations. In addition, Iraqi forces constructed obstacle belts of barbed wire and minefields along the Kuwaiti-Saudi border to secure its gains and deter attack.¹¹

The world responded swiftly. With Resolution 660, the United Nations (UN) condemned Iraq and authorized economic sanctions. President George H.W. Bush ordered U.S. forces to Saudi Arabia for Operation DESERT SHIELD to protect U.S. citizens; prevent further Iraqi aggression; affect Iraq’s withdrawal from Kuwait; and restore the Kuwaiti government. The U.S. rapidly deployed fighter aircraft and soldiers from the 82nd



(Image credit: Department of Defence)

A Kuwait M-84 tank during Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, 1990.

Airborne Division. These were the meager beginnings of a U.S.-led coalition representing more than thirty nations that deployed to the desert in late 1990. On 17 August, President Bush authorized the first call-up of reservists for 90 days (later extended to 180 days) to augment active-duty forces, with the first U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) units mobilizing a week later.

The first phase of Operation DESERT SHIELD deployments (August – October 1990) included Headquarters (HQ), U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM); HQ, U.S. Army, Central (USARCENT); HQ, XVIII Airborne Corps; and units from the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, the 24th Infantry Division (ID), 1st Cavalry Division, 197th Infantry Brigade, and the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR). U.S. units staged behind Saudi and coalition forces along the border. Led by General (GEN) H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Jr., USCENTCOM exercised command and control over U.S. and British forces and maintained close cooperation with French forces. Led by Saudi Lieutenant General (LTG) Khalid bin Sultan, Joint Forces Command (JFC) commanded other nations' forces. These commands worked through a Coalition Coordination, Communication, and Integration Center (C3IC).¹²

With almost a quarter million U.S. troops deployed by late October, Bush authorized another 200,000 in



(Image credit: Department of Defence)

A Royal Saudi Air Force F-15 taxis past American soldiers newly arrived in Saudi Arabia, August 1990.



George H.W. Bush, Commander-in-Chief during successful military actions in Panama and the Middle East in his short time in office, speaks at the White House in early 1991.

The United Nations Security Council discusses sanctions on Iraq after that nation's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

early November to reflect the expanded mission from defense of Saudi Arabia to the liberation of Kuwait. This began the second phase of deployments (November – February), which included HQ, VII Corps (from Europe), and units of the 1st ID, 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions (ADs), 2nd ACR, and others.¹³ The mounting coalition on the Arabian Peninsula would soon be complemented by additional forces to Iraq's north.

In September 1990, U.S. Air Forces in Europe (US-AFE) briefed GEN John R. Galvin, Commander, U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), about opening a second front from northern-neighboring Turkey. In December, following Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) approval, USAFE received the JTF-Proven Force Operation Order (OPORD). It directed the appointment of a JTF commander and staff, and for planning to begin. Major General James L. Jamerson, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, USAFE, became Commander, JTF-Proven Force. Lacking Turkish Government approval for U.S. offensive operations from within its borders, JTF-Proven Force was activated at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on 7 January 1991. Gaining last-minute Turkish approval before the air war began, USAFE activated the 7440th Composite Wing at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, to fly missions against Iraqi targets.¹⁴



GEN H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Jr., Commander-in-Chief, USCENTCOM (CINCCENT), during Operations DESERT SHIELD/ DESERT STORM, 1990-1991.



LTG Khalid bin Sultan, Commander of Joint Forces Command, visits a Nigerian military outpost during Operation DESERT SHIELD.

On 29 November 1990, UN Resolution 678 authorized military force against Iraq if it failed to withdraw from Kuwait by 15 January 1991. A last-ditch attempt at diplomacy in Geneva, Switzerland, failed when, on 9 January, the Iraqi Foreign Minister rejected a letter from President Bush, delivered by Secretary of State James A. Baker. On 12 January, the U.S. Congress granted Bush the authority to proceed with military action. The deadline passed three days later without Iraq withdrawing.¹⁵ The stage was set for Operation DESERT STORM. It was in this context that the U.S. Army would establish a multi-battalion PSYOP infra-

MAJOR ARMY FORCES

Organization for Combat

ARCENT

XVIII AIRBORNE CORPS

- 82d Airborne Division (-)
- 101st Airborne Division (AASLT)
- 24th Infantry Division (MECH)
 - 197th Infantry Brigade (MECH)
- 3d ACR
- 12th AVN BDE
- 18th AVN BDE
- XVIII Corps Artillery
 - 18th FA BDE
 - 212th FA BDE
 - 196th FA BDE
- 6th Light Armoured Division (FR) (TACON)
 - 2d BDE, 82d Airborne Division (OPCON)
- Other Corps Assets

VII CORPS

- 1st Armored Division
 - 3d BDE, 3d Infantry Division
- 3d Armored Division
- 1st Infantry Division (MECH)
 - 2d Armored Division (FWD)
- 1st Cavalry Division (-)
- 2d ACR
- 11th AVN BDE
- VII Corps Artillery
 - 210th FA BDE
 - 42d FA BDE
 - 75th FA BDE
 - 142d FA BDE
- 1st Armored Division (UK) (TACON)
- Other Corps Assets

SOCCENT CONTROL

- 5th Special Forces Group
- 3d Special Forces Group (-)

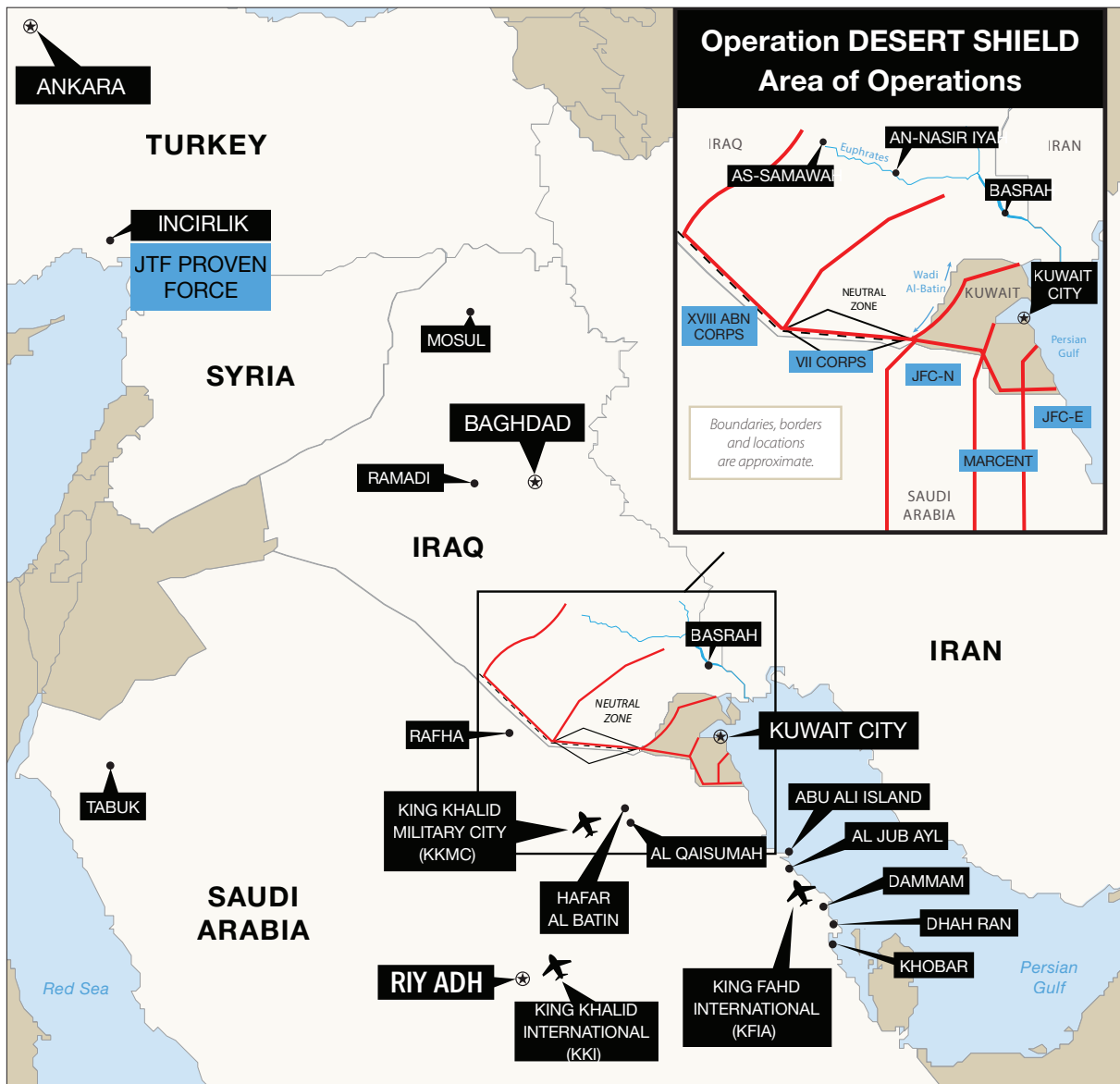
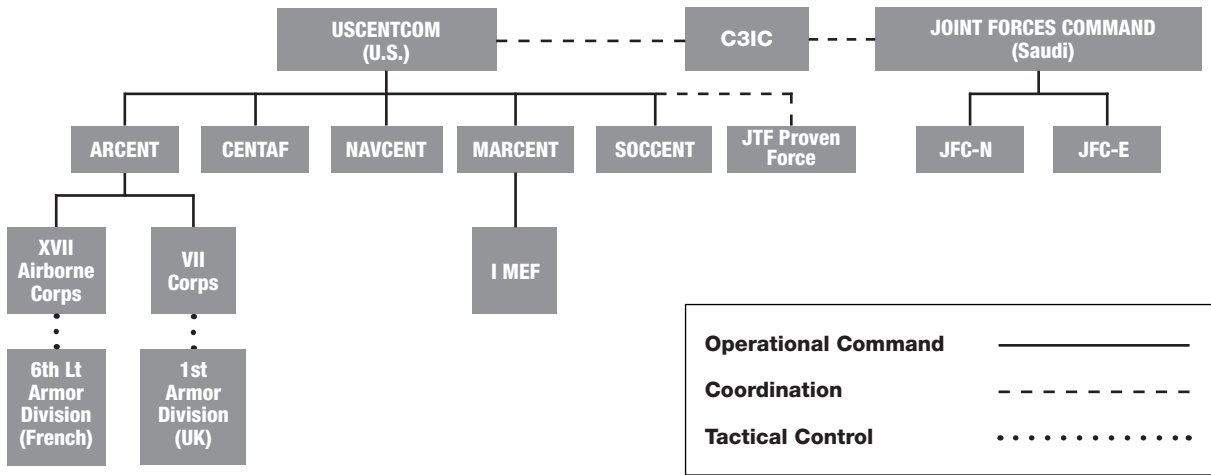
MARCENT CONTROL

- 1st BDE, 2d Armored Division

ABBREVIATION KEY:

- AASLT - Air Assault
- ACR - Armored Cavalry Regiment
- AVN BDE - Aviation Brigade
- BDE - Brigade
- FA BDE - Field Artillery Brigade
- MECH - Mechanized
- TACON - Tactical Control
- OPCON - Operational Control

COALITION COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS



structure to support the coalition in the upcoming fight against Iraq.

Background to PSYOP in DESERT SHIELD

Key to operations in both Panama and then Saudi Arabia was the Fort Bragg-based 8th POB, commanded by LTC Jeffrey B. Jones. Though regionally aligned with USCENTCOM, the 8th POB had replaced 1st POB in Panama in early 1990. While many 8th POB officers and soldiers were in Panama in the months prior to Iraq's invasion, others were traveling on temporary duty (TDY) to the U.S. Military Training Mission (USMTM) in Saudi Arabia; to Defense Attaché Offices in Iraq, Kuwait, Djibouti, Yemen, Jordan, and Pakistan; and for training throughout USCENTCOM. According to Jones and his Executive Officer (XO), MAJ Jack N. Summe, these TDYs later proved their weight in gold during the Persian Gulf War.¹⁶

Soon after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, GEN Carl W. Stiner, Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), announced plans to send PSYOP forces to Saudi Arabia. Loudspeaker personnel from the 4th POG deployed with the first 2,300-man lift from the 82nd Airborne Division, but this was just a start. Orders came down from



8th POB DUI



(image credit: NARA)

Almost immediately after the invasion, GEN Carl W. Stiner, Commander-in-Chief, USSOCOM (CINCSOC), ordered U.S. Army PSYOP forces to prepare for deployment.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) through 1st Special Operations Command (1st SOCOM) to 4th POG to task-organize personnel and resources; develop and pack products and scripts; and make plans to utilize host nation media and print facilities. Initial steps were also taken to deploy the 8th POB, the 9th POB, and soldiers and media production and dissemination assets from the new Product Dissemination Battalion (PDB).¹⁷ In the meantime, some TDY 8th POB soldiers in Saudi Arabia helped lay the foundation for their arrival.

Staff Sergeant (SSG) Gregory A. Parmele was with USMTM in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Understandably, the non-commissioned officer (NCO) made frequent calls back to Fort Bragg to his parent battalion, namely the S-3, MAJ Richard A. Williams, for information, guidance, and planning. On 8 August, he informed 8th POB that the U.S. had received tentative permission to use two state-owned Aramco radio stations, an Aramco television station, and print facilities in Dhahran, and a Saudi government TV station in Dammam. He also reported a mixed atmosphere of fear, anxiety, and apathy among the Saudi population, and initial Saudi desires to keep requests for U.S. support quiet. Parmele



(image credit: U.S. Army)

Having only recently returned home from Panama, 8th POB commander LTC Jeffrey B. Jones deployed again to head the 8th PSYOP Task Force (8th POTF) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.



USAF Maj. Gen. Donald L. Kaufman (right), Chief, USMTM, accompanies Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney (center) during his visit to Saudi Arabia in August 1990. The two-man USMTM “PSYOP Desk” (not pictured) helped pave the way for additional PSYOP forces. USMTM was the senior U.S. headquarters until the arrival of USCENTCOM-Forward.

and another NCO formed an ad hoc PSYOP desk within the USMTM, and linked up with John Kincannon, a U.S. Information Service (USIS) representative serving in the U.S. Embassy.¹⁸ The two sergeants accepted help from whoever was willing to offer it.

As the world feared wider conflict and the U.S. weighed its options, the two 8th POB NCOs coordinated with the Saudi Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of Information (MoI) on many topics, including the assignment of Arabic linguists, and how to address public concerns in eastern Saudi Arabia.¹⁹ They learned that the MoI must approve all PSYOP messages emanating from Saudi facilities, but not from U.S. assets. Parmele also reported the presence of 70,000 Kuwaiti refugees in eastern Saudi Arabia, some of whom they wished to talk to (with Saudi assistance) to gain information potentially useful for PSYOP.²⁰

On 9 August, Parmele again called the 8th POB. After relaying Saudi King Fahd’s public admission of U.S. support, he informed his unit that USIS representatives in the Saudi capital of Riyadh were arranging use of local media facilities on their behalf. At the same time, USMTM elements were locating translators for



Saudi Arabia’s King Fahd (rear, left) and LTG Khalid Bin Sultan, JFC Commander (rear, right), review Royal Saudi troops. King Fahd welcomed and openly acknowledged U.S. and international military support.

when PSYOP forces arrived.²¹ Finally, USMTM used its PSYOP team as its media liaison. On 13 August, the soldiers provided the foreign press pool with information on Dhahran; escorted journalists to view USAF F-15s and other equipment at the airfield; and provided an interview to the English-Arabic language *Saudi Gazette*.²² Resisting requests from senior leaders to begin PSYOP messaging too soon, the NCOs continued making interagency contacts, recorded Arabic speeches and news, and talked with Iraqi defectors and Kuwaiti refugees.²³ This “PSYOP Desk,” ably manned by two well-placed junior PSYOP NCOs, held the line until PSYOP forces began arriving in strength about a month later.

JPOG and the Theater PSYOP Plan

While these NCOs worked from Saudi Arabia, a thirteen-person cell from 4th POG, led by COL Normand, traveled from Fort Bragg to MacDill Air Force Base (AFB), Florida, a week after the Iraqi invasion to begin the PSYOP planning effort. Just as Normand had recently been the USSOUTHCOM PSYOP officer in Panama, he was now the USCENTCOM PSYOP offi-

cer, with his team designated as the Joint PSYOP Group (JPOG).²⁴ The JPOG would establish “overall theater policy and operational themes for the campaign, subject only to [Commander-in-Chief, USCENTCOM (CINCCENT)] approval”—at least that was the hope.²⁵ As it turned out, getting the theater PSYOP plan approved in the Pentagon, as required by the aforementioned OP3, proved far more difficult than anyone had anticipated.

With GEN Schwarzkopf temporarily inaccessible due to the hustle-and-bustle within USCENTCOM, COL Normand and the JPOG met initially with the Director of Operations, Maj. Gen. Burton R. Moore (USAF), and others on the staff to see what they had in mind. From these meetings, they surmised that USCENTCOM seemed content to leave planning details up to the JPOG. First, the JPOG developed 64 short-term themes and talking points for JCS approval and interagency use when speaking with the international media. Days before the JPOG deployed in late August, three civilian analysts from 4th POG accompanying the JPOG (who had helped develop those themes) returned to the Group at Fort Bragg. From there, they were to analyze open-source media for signs of those talking points and

An EC-130E Volant Solo aircraft of the 193rd SOG, Pennsylvania Air National Guard, taxis on the runway. The 193rd had worked with PSYOP forces in Panama in 1989-1990; escorted the JPOG to Saudi Arabia in late August 1990; and supported the PSYOP effort through the end of the Persian Gulf War.



(Image credit: NARA)

(Images credit: NARA)



Left: BG John A. Leide, Director of Intelligence, USCENTCOM, deployed to Riyadh in August 1990 with USCENTCOM-Forward. It was Leide who informed the JPOG of GEN Schwarzkopf's desire for a MILDEC plan for eastern Kuwait. **Middle:** USAF Maj. Gen. Burton R. Moore, Director of Operations, USCENTCOM, while in Riyadh as part of USCENTCOM-Forward. Led by COL Normand, the JPOG reported directly to the J-3. **Right:** GEN Colin L. Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), 1989-1993.

update the JPOG daily on their findings. They were also to keep tabs on Iraqi propaganda.²⁶

Meanwhile, the JPOG then turned to the more pressing problem: creating a workable framework for the overall PSYOP effort in the Persian Gulf. According to Normand, the first request came from Brigadier General (BG) John A. Leide, the USCENTCOM Director of Intelligence, who told him, "We just got through talking here [and] Schwarzkopf wants a PSYOP plan that will tie down some Iraqi units on the coast to keep them where they are up in the . . . northern coastal areas of Kuwait." Accordingly, the JPOG developed a basic concept for military deception (MILDEC) plan involving a mock amphibious invasion of a U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) Task Force. This was the genesis of the MILDEC campaign known commonly as 'The Wave' that came to fruition several months later, and "turned out to be a pretty successful program."²⁷

A broader PSYOP plan was needed, however. The JPOG identified three target audiences: the Iraqi military (broken down by types of units), the Iraqi people, and Hussein's inner circle. The JPOG did not get much farther before deploying to Riyadh on 31 August 1990, on board an EC-130E from the 193rd Special Operations Group (Pennsylvania Air National Guard), as part of USCENTCOM Forward. Assigned to the J-3, USCENTCOM, the JPOG was supplemented with the 8th POB/POTF commander, LTC Jones; a PSYOP Planner (MAJ) from USEUCOM, to begin contingency planning for a possible second front from Turkey; and Liaison Officers (LNOs) from USIS and other government agencies. Located at the Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) building, the theater-level JPOG would help formulate policy, advise the CINC, and support the US-

ARCENT-assigned 8th POTF upon arrival. The JPOG resumed efforts to write the theater PSYOP program.²⁸

By mid-September, the JPOG had completed the PSYOP plan, named BURNING HAWK, which consisted of 26 objectives and 117 supporting lines-of-effort (LOEs) meeting National Command Authority and CINCCENT intent. The common thread throughout BURNING HAWK was placing blame for the international crisis squarely on Saddam Hussein. Containing overt and covert aspects, the plan would entail significant interagency coordination and cooperation. Accordingly, USCENTCOM created an Information Coordinating Committee (ICC). Chaired by the USCENTCOM J-5, the ICC included COL Normand and representatives from such agencies as the Public Affairs Office, the Judge Advocate General, the U.S. State Department, and USIS. Once this committee agreed on the plan, it entered USCENTCOM staff review before going up for GEN Schwarzkopf's approval.²⁹

On 19 September, as the plan weaved its way through USCENTCOM amidst the coalition buildup in Saudi Arabia, Normand sent an informal update to the PSYOP community back home. In it he lauded the ICC, which had helped develop the USCENTCOM PSYOP plan, then pending CINC approval. In expectation of this approval, recently arrived 8th POTF soldiers were preparing specific products. Finally, he informed the Fort Bragg community of a draft USEUCOM PSYOP plan, "which will be a vital link in supporting theater programs, as many audiences overlap [between the] two AORs [Areas of Responsibility]."³⁰ At the time, things were progressing smoothly, and few in Saudi Arabia anticipated the difficulty that lay ahead in getting BURNING HAWK approved in the Pentagon.



(Image credit: OMFAN/ARRAWADH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY)

Constructed in 1987, the Gulf Cooperative Council building in Riyadh was the location of the JPOG and 8th POTF.

The day after COL Normand’s informal update, GEN Schwarzkopf approved BURNING HAWK. It then went up the chain to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), GEN Colin L. Powell, in accordance with OP3.³¹ At this point, things ground to a halt, delaying proactive PSYOP efforts in DESERT SHIELD. According to 8th POTF leadership, the “approval process, mandated by [OP3], was glacial . . . Quite literally, months of potential psychological preparation of the battlefield were wasted.”³² Another source echoed this point: “A delay in Washington approval of the initial theater plan . . . precluded [PSYOP] activity during the buildup of U.S. and coalition forces in 1990.”³³ A post-war summary agreed, “In effect, we had forfeited the PSYOPS [sic] battlefield to the Iraqis for three months because of the lengthiness of our approval process.”³⁴ Normand remarked, “This thing turned into a comedy of errors . . . because the approval process was not well defined.”³⁵ In reality, the problem was not that the approval process was not well defined; it was that OP3 was uncondusive to an efficient or quick turnaround in a near-war scenario.



(Image credit: NARA)

From left to right, GEN Powell, Secretary of Defense Cheney, GEN Schwarzkopf, and Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Paul D. Wolfowitz discuss pending military operations in the Persian Gulf, in early 1991. Just weeks earlier, Wolfowitz and Cheney had approved only a fraction of the PSYOP plan BURNING HAWK, which had been picked apart piece-by-piece in Washington since September.



In a press conference during Operation DESERT SHIELD, GEN Schwarzkopf said, “If we do have to go to war, PSYOP are going to be an absolutely critical—critical—part of any campaign that we must get involved in.” Despite significant delays in PSYOP plan approval, Schwarzkopf’s words soon rang true.

Within a week of arriving at the Pentagon, BURNING HAWK was split into a covert and an overt (‘white’) plan, each requiring approval through separate channels. A DoD ‘white’ sub-plan, consisting of 35 out of the original 117 actions, was developed, approved by the Joint Staff, and sent up the chain for approval by SECDEF Richard B. Cheney. Even under ideal conditions, this would take weeks. On 12 October, the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Security Policy) (DUSD[SP]) recommended that the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD[P]), Paul D. Wolfowitz, approve less than half of the DoD sub-plan. Once this was done, it was still three weeks before Cheney received the curtailed DoD portion of BURNING HAWK.³⁶ Come November, PSYOP forces in Saudi Arabia were hardly closer to being able to conduct operations in DESERT SHIELD.

Despite the painfully slow bureaucratic process in Washington, other stars were aligning in the USCENTCOM AOR. In October 1990, an ad hoc, PSYOP-focused Coalition Warfare Cell was formed, consisting



Command of 4th POG transferred to COL Layton G. Dunbar in December 1990. A 173rd Airborne Brigade combat veteran from Vietnam, 8th SF Group alumnus, and former 1st POB commander, Dunbar was the right man for Group command as war with Iraq drew near.

of two Saudi and two U.S. PSYOP officers. Locally, it developed a PSYOP plan similar to BURNING HAWK. Counterparts in Cairo, Egypt, were also writing a plan. The Saudis proposed a new Combined PSYOP Cell, attached to the 8th POTF. With support from GEN Schwarzkopf and LTG Khalid, this cell was formally established under the command of a Saudi brigadier general, and would consist of U.S., Saudi, British, Egyptian, and Kuwaiti personnel.³⁷ Over the ensuing months, the cell worked with the 8th POTF in developing, translating, and pretesting products, to include program content for the future Voice of the Gulf. The Combined PSYOP Cell helped bridge the gap between the initial deployment of PSYOP forces and the final approval of the theater PSYOP plan in late 1990.³⁸

Back at the Pentagon, SECDEF Cheney approved the skeletal DoD ‘sub-plan’ on 1 November. It still took two more weeks for it to be turned into formal implementation guidance. On 13 November, USCENTCOM learned that the SECDEF had approved merely six out of the original 117 LOEs in BURNING HAWK! Incensed by this outcome, USCENTCOM planned to appeal it. In late November, 4th POG informed the Joint Staff that the CINCCENT wanted a broader PSYOP plan, and that several disapproved initiatives were being returned for reconsideration. This happened on 5 December, with resubmission of 21 actions (accompanied by some harsh words from GEN Schwarzkopf to get it done). JCS approved and forwarded only 16 of them, which Wolfowitz approved in mid-December, some three months after BURNING HAWK was ini-



A C-141 Starlifter departs from Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, for Saudi Arabia, January 1991. That month, around 200 PSYOP soldiers from the active-duty 6th POB, USAR 13th POB, and USAR 18th, 19th, 244th, 245th, and 362nd PSYOP Companies left Pope AFB to join some 400 others from the 4th POG, 8th and 9th POBs, and Product Dissemination Battalion, already in-country.

tially submitted.³⁹ The next month was spent getting buy-in for the scaled-down plan from the Saudis and other Arab partners.⁴⁰

On 17 December 1990, after laboring for over three months to write and get approval for the PSYOP plan, COL Normand relinquished command of 4th POG to Special Forces (SF)- and PSYOP-qualified COL Layton G. ‘Gerry’ Dunbar, a former 1st POB commander, who had been in-country working side-by-side with Normand since October.⁴¹ Normand was initially uncomfortable with leaving Group command as war drew nearer, but reached the decision to leave after discussing the issue with GEN Schwarzkopf and LTG Michael F. Spigelmire (CG, USASOC):

“Schwarzkopf initially was hesitant, but I was very fortunate I was able to get Gerry Dunbar over early and had been able to give him some visibility with the CINC and with the J-3. They were comfortable with him, and GEN Schwarzkopf finally concurred.”⁴²

With the PSYOP plan just approved, it was a sensible point for Dunbar to take command. According to MAJ James A. Treadwell, the 4th POG S-3, “When [Dunbar] took over, he already knew everything that was going on.”⁴³ The next month was spent arraying, equipping, and preparing PSYOP units and soldiers for the conflict headed their way on 17 January 1991.

Conclusion

In the post-Vietnam era, PSYOP units were undermanned, equipment was dilapidated or non-existent, and training was negligible. However, the 1985 DoD Master Plan set in motion five years of gradual revitalization. In Operation JUST CAUSE, PSYOP forces implemented the new group- and battalion-level deployment model. In addition, the mission provided soldiers with a real-world learning experience. By the time Iraq invaded Kuwait and Operation DESERT SHIELD began in August 1990, PSYOP was on far better footing than it had been at any point in the previous fifteen years. That was the good news.

Conversely, PSYOP campaign plan approval processes were still subject to the cumbersome 1984 Overt Peacetime PSYOP Plan (OP3), which was ill-suited for the fast-moving crisis in the Middle East. A shadow of the original plan submitted by the JPOG, the final version of BURNING HAWK was not approved until nearly three months later in mid-December 1990. “Literally months were wasted,” according to LTC Jones

and MAJ Summe.⁴⁴ There was almost unanimous agreement after the war that theater CINCs should have the authority to approve at least a generic PSYOP plan, without having to wait on full JCS or SECDEF approval.⁴⁵ As COL Dunbar remarked, “You need a pre-hostility phase in [PSYOP] . . . You need to conduct a psychological preparation of the battlefield, and that means you do it before the war starts.” He held out hope that “if we do it over again, with what we know now, I don’t think we’d have that kind of delay getting the plan approved.”⁴⁶

Notwithstanding this lag in approval, progress was made in the interim to prepare for a large-scale PSYOP

effort against Saddam Hussein’s forces in Kuwait and Iraq. Joint, interagency, and combined PSYOP coordination and planning, to include the formation of the Combined PSYOP Cell, helped fill the gap while BURNING HAWK languished in the Pentagon. More importantly, the period before the initiation of hostilities on 17 January 1991 witnessed the deployment of hundreds of soldiers and equipment from four active-duty PSYOP battalions, one USAR battalion, and multiple USAR companies, as well as pilots and crewmembers from the 193rd SOG. These PSYOP deployments during Operation DESERT SHIELD are the topic of a future article. 🔥

Takeaways:

- 1 In a decrepit state after Vietnam, PSYOP forces made a gradual recovery in the 1980s, gained relevant experience in Panama, and were ready for war in the Persian Gulf.
- 2 TDYs to USCENTCOM before the invasion paid off for 8th POB soldiers during DESERT SHIELD by giving them experience, area familiarity, and the ability to make advanced arrangements for a greater PSYOP role.
- 3 OP3 was sufficient for peacetime PSYOP programs, but not for situations in which conflict was likely or imminent in the near-term.

Endnotes

- 1 Department of Defense, DoD Directive S-3321.1, “Overt Psychological Operations Conducted by the Military Services in Peacetime and in Contingencies Short of Declared War,” 26 July 1984, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC. **According to this policy, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD[P]) had authority to “review and approve all PSYOP programs to be conducted during peacetime or in contingencies short of declared war.” The Assistant Secretaries of State (ASDs) for International Security Affairs and International Security Policy, in coordination with the USD(P), would advise the JCS in the development of PSYOP programs related to their geographic areas of responsibility. The DoD General Counsel was to review all proposed PSYOP programs “in peacetime or during contingencies short of declared war.” The JCS was to review PSYOP plans submitted by Unified Commands, like USCENTCOM, “to determine whether they are adequate and feasible,” and “provide for the direction of PSYOP” (a vaguely worded function). And Unified Commands were to “plan, support, and conduct in peacetime and in contingencies short of declared war [PSYOP] in support of U.S. regional objectives, policies, interests, and theater military missions.”**
- 2 Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., “Psychological Operations, Special Operations, and U.S. Strategy,” in *Special Operations in U.S. Strategy*, ed. Frank R. Barnett, B. Hugh Tovar, and Richard H. Shultz (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1984), 237.
- 3 COL (ret.) Anthony H. Normand, interview with Richard D. Stewart, 10 October 1991, Folder 957, Box ADA-1, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Normand interview, 10 October 1991.
- 4 Richard B. Davenport, “The Need for an Innovative Joint Psychological Warfare Force Structure,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 88 (January 2018), <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/publications/article/1412317/the-need-for-an-innovative-joint-psychological-warfare-force-structure>.
- 5 Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., “Military Psychological Operations,” in *Political Warfare and Psychological Operations: Rethinking the U.S. Approach*, ed. Carnes Lord and Frank R. Barnett (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1989), 50
- 6 Government-produced country studies typically addressed the history, geography/topography, demographics, economics, and government of a given country. While valuable, they were quite dense, current only as of the publication date, and not always conducive for a short-notice deployment. COL Normand’s intent was for civilian analysts to create products that were more current; reflected recent events; and provided the immediate local or regional contexts, to include summaries of the information ‘landscape,’ in the areas to which PSYOP soldiers were deploying.
- 7 Normand interview, 10 October 1991.
- 8 Normand interview, 10 October 1991.
- 9 USACAPOC, “DESERT STORM Observations [JUST CAUSE],” n.d., Folder 235, Box 3-3B, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 10 1st SOCOM, “Kuwait/Iraq: War of Words,” n.d., Folder 966, Box ADA-1, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter “War of Words”; Association of the United States Army, *The U.S. Army in Operation DESERT STORM: An Overview* (Arlington, VA: AUSA, 1991), 3.
- 11 *The U.S. Army in Operation DESERT STORM: An Overview*, 2-3; GulfLINK, “Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm,” n.d., <https://gulflink.health.mil/timeline/index.html>, hereafter GulfLINK; ARSOTF, “ARSOTF Battle Journal; Operation DESERT Storm, 16 January 1991 – 4 March 1991,” n.d., TAB B, Folder 427, Box 4-1B, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter “ARSOTF Battle Journal”; XVIII Airborne Corps to 101st Airborne Division et al., “SUBJECT: SPOT Report 18-33-90,” 19 August 1990, Folder 890, Box 17-5A, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC; USSOCOM, *Psychological Operations During Desert Shield/Storm: A Post-Operational Analysis* (MacDill AFB, FL: USSOCOM, 1993), 1-C-3, 1-C-5.
- 12 *Psychological Operations During Desert Shield/Storm: A Post-Operational Analysis*, 1-C-2; GulfLINK; *The U.S. Army in Operation DESERT STORM: An Overview*, 2-8. **JFC was organized into JFC-North and JFC-East.**
- 13 HQDA to USFORSCOM et al., “SUBJECT: Alert Order for Presidential Call-Up of Selected Reserve to Active Federal Duty,” 17 August 1990, Folder 963, Box ADA-1, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC; GulfLINK; *The U.S. Army in Operation DESERT STORM: An Overview*, 2, 8; *Psychological Operations During Desert Shield/Storm: A Post-Operational Analysis*, 1-C-4.
- 14 Global Security, “Joint Task Force Proven Force,” n.d., https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/proven_force.htm, hereafter “Joint Task Force Proven Force”; Jeffrey B. Jones and Jack N. Summe, “Psychological Operations in DESERT SHIELD, DESERT STORM, and URBAN FREEDOM,” *Institute of Land Warfare: Landpower Essay Series*, No. 97-3 (August 1997): 2, hereafter “PSYOP in DESERT SHIELD, DESERT STORM, and URBAN FREEDOM.” **JTF Proven Force had Air Force, Army, and Special Operations components.**
- 15 *Psychological Operations During Desert Shield/Storm: A Post-Operational Analysis*, 1-C-5-1-C-6.
- 16 “PSYOP in DESERT SHIELD, DESERT STORM, and URBAN FREEDOM.”
- 17 *Psychological Operations During Desert Shield/Storm: A Post-Operational Analysis*, 3-6, 1-C-2; “PSYOP in DESERT SHIELD, DESERT STORM, and URBAN FREEDOM,” 1.
- 18 8th POB, “SUBJECT: PSYOP Sitrep from Saudi Arabia #1,” 8 August 1990, Folder 958, Box ADA-1, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter “Sitrep #1.”

- 19 "Sitrep #1."
- 20 8th POB, "SUBJECT: PSYOP Sitrep from Saudi Arabia #2," 9 August 1990, Folder 958, Box ADA-1, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 21 8th POB, "SUBJECT: PSYOP Sitrep from Saudi Arabia #3," 9 August 1990, Folder 958, Box ADA-1, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 22 8th POB, "SUBJECT: PSYOP Sitrep from Saudi Arabia #5," 14 August 1990, Folder 958, Box ADA-1, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 23 8th POB, "SUBJECT: PSYOP SITREP from Saudi Arabia #6," 15 August 1990, Folder 958, Box ADA-1, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 24 *Psychological Operations During Desert Shield/Storm: A Post-Operational Analysis*, 2-5; "PSYOP in DESERT SHIELD, DESERT STORM, and URBAN FREEDOM," 1; CDR, 4th POG, "SUBJECT: Informal PSYOP Update 10 Aug – 14 Sep 1990," 14 September 1990, Folder 101, Box 3-2B, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter "Informal PSYOP Update 10 Aug – 14 Sep 1990." **This JPOG consisted of COL Normand; the 4th POG Deputy Commanding Officer (DCO) (LTC); a PSYOP Specialist (MAJ); PSYOP Specialist/Ops NCO (SSG); an Intelligence Officer and NCO (MAJ and SGT); an Administrative Officer/HQ Commandant (First Lieutenant [1LT]); an Administrative Specialist (SGT); Automation Operator (SPC); a civilian Automation Specialist (GS-11); and three civilian Analysts (GS-13, GS-12, GS-11). Per Normand's request, two PSYOP planners at USSOCOM were added as augmentees (COL and LTC).**
- 25 Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, *PSYOP at War: The Management of Strategic Information in Panama and the Persian Gulf* (Washington, DC: NDU, 1993), 14.
- 26 *Psychological Operations During Desert Shield/Storm: A Post-Operational Analysis*, 1-C-2; Normand interview, 10 October 1991; CDR, 4th POG, "SUBJECT: Informal PSYOP Update 10 Aug – 14 Sep 1990," 14 September 1990, Folder 101, Box 3-2B, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter "Informal PSYOP Update 10 Aug – 14 Sep 1990." **A later USACAPOC Lessons Learned report criticized the exclusively active-duty makeup of the JPOG. It recommended the creation and employment of a CA and PSYOP Assessment Team (CAPOAT), led by a senior USACAPOC officer, to address theater-level requirements in the future.** USACAPOC, "DESERT STORM Observations [CAPOAT]," n.d., Folder 235, Box 3-3B, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 27 Normand interview, 10 October 1991. **The Wave effort will be addressed in a future article.**
- 28 *Psychological Operations During Desert Shield/Storm: A Post-Operational Analysis*, 2-5, 1-C-3; "Informal PSYOP Update 10 Aug – 14 Sep 1990."
- 29 "Informal PSYOP Update 10 Aug – 14 Sep 1990."
- 30 Tony Normand, "SUBJECT: Informal Update to PSYOP Community," 19 September 1990, Folder 264, Box 3-3B, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 31 *Psychological Operations During Desert Shield/Storm: A Post-Operational Analysis*, 1-C-3; "Roles and Missions of Special Operations in Desert Storm: An Initial Historical Summary," Folder 764, Box 5-2A, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 32 "PSYOP in DESERT SHIELD, DESERT STORM, and URBAN FREEDOM," 2.
- 33 *PSYOP at War*, 15.
- 34 "Roles and Missions of Special Operations in Desert Storm."
- 35 Normand interview, 10 October 1991.
- 36 "Roles and Missions of Special Operations in Desert Storm"; *Psychological Operations During Desert Shield/Storm: A Post-Operational Analysis*, 2-8, 1-C-4.
- 37 COL (ret.) Layton G. Dunbar, interview with Stanley Sandler, 1991, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Dunbar interview, 1991.
- 38 *Psychological Operations During Desert Shield/Storm: A Post-Operational Analysis*, 4-5.
- 39 *Psychological Operations During Desert Shield/Storm: A Post-Operational Analysis*, 2-9, 1-C-5; Normand interview, 10 October 1991; Richard W. Stewart, Information Paper, "VOLANT SOLO and DESERT STORM," n.d., 1-2, Folder 960, Box ADA-1, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter "VOLANT SOLO and DESERT STORM"; "Roles and Missions of Special Operations in Desert Storm."
- 40 Dunbar interview, 1991.
- 41 Dunbar interview, 1991.
- 42 Normand interview, 10 October 1991.
- 43 COL (ret.) James A. Treadwell, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 25 February 2021, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Treadwell interview, 25 February 2021.
- 44 "PSYOP in DESERT SHIELD, DESERT STORM, and URBAN FREEDOM," 8.
- 45 "PSYOP in DESERT SHIELD, DESERT STORM, and URBAN FREEDOM," 7.
- 46 Dunbar interview, 1991.

BEYOND THE NUMBERS

The 528th Support Battalion in Operations
DESERT SHIELD & DESERT STORM

by Christopher E. Howard

Abstract: *Temporarily spared inactivation following Operation JUST CAUSE, the 528th Special Operations Support Battalion's fate remained undecided when Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990. Consequently, its involvement in U.S. military operations to defend Saudi Arabia (DESERT SHIELD) and liberate Kuwait (DESERT STORM) was not a foregone conclusion. But, when U.S. Special Operations Command, Central (SOCCENT) needed an immediate logistics solution for Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) deploying to Saudi Arabia, it requested the 528th. This proved to be a fortuitous decision for both the 528th and the myriad ARSOF units they supported.*

Operation DESERT STORM concluded on 28 February 1991, after six weeks of intense aerial bombardment and a 100-hour ground campaign that ejected Iraqi forces from occupied Kuwait. Commenting on the rapid and overwhelming success of that operation, General (GEN) H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Jr., Commander-in-Chief (CINC), U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), singled out U.S. Special

Operations Forces (SOF) for praise, referring to them as the glue that held the diverse U.S.-led coalition together.¹ Schwarzkopf did not specifically mention the 528th Special Operations Support Battalion (SOSB), but his senior SOF commander in theater, U.S. Army Special Forces Colonel (COL) Jesse L. Johnson, described the 528th as his “saving grace.”² Johnson’s deputy, U.S. Air Force (USAF) Colonel Douglass Brazil, echoed that sen-



General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Jr. commanded USCENTCOM during Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM.

timent: “we’d have died without them.”³ Viewed in this light, the 528th SOSB was a critical, but largely overlooked, ingredient in Schwarzkopf’s “glue.”

Few published histories of the Persian Gulf War, as Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM are commonly known, address the 528th SOSB’s role.⁴ However, several unpublished histories, including those produced by the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) History Office, devote a few paragraphs to ARSOF combat service support (CSS) in this conflict.⁵ These accounts typically describe 528th SOSB contributions in terms of quantities: number of miles travelled, requisitions filled, maintenance jobs completed, and meals distributed. They do not provide context for understanding these numbers, nor do they put faces on the ARSOF Support soldiers respon-

sible for sustaining ARSOF.⁶ In contrast, this article fills that gap by relating how this small, one-of-a-kind support battalion, with limited operational experience and no role in existing USCENTCOM plans, deployed to Saudi Arabia and helped sustain ARSOF during the U.S. military’s largest ground campaign since the Vietnam War.

Background

In 1986, the U.S. Army activated the 13th Support Battalion (Special Operations) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to provide dedicated logistical support to ARSOF units assigned to 1st Special Operations Command (1st SOCOM). Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Louis G. Mason, its 163 soldiers were organized into a headquarters company (HHC) and three functional detachments (Supply, Maintenance, and Transportation). In May 1987, the Army reflagged the 13th as the 528th Support Battalion, better known as the 528th SOSB. Soon thereafter, it began deploying small contingents to Bahrain to support ARSOF in Operations EARNEST WILL and PRIME CHANCE – the so-called “Tanker War” with Iran that lasted from 1987 to 1989.⁷ That mission was ongoing in May 1989 when the Army ordered the 528th’s inactivation, effective September 1990.⁸

Rather than passively wait for inactivation, 528th leaders successfully inserted it into U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) contingency plans for Panama. In December 1989, two task-organized elements from the 528th, totaling thirty-seven soldiers, deployed in support of Operation JUST CAUSE.⁹ The 528th’s performance there convinced the CINC, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), GEN James J. Lindsay, to ask the Army to reconsider its inactivation decision. At a March 1990 meeting with Lindsay, GEN Robert W. Riscassi, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, agreed to postpone the inactivation, pending a comprehensive study of ARSOF CSS.¹⁰ This study was underway when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein’s tanks overran neighboring Kuwait that August.

The 528th SOSB gained valuable experience in Pan-



U.S. Central Command
Shoulder Sleeve Insignia (SSI)



U.S. Central Command
Distinctive Unit Insignia (DUI)



528th DUI



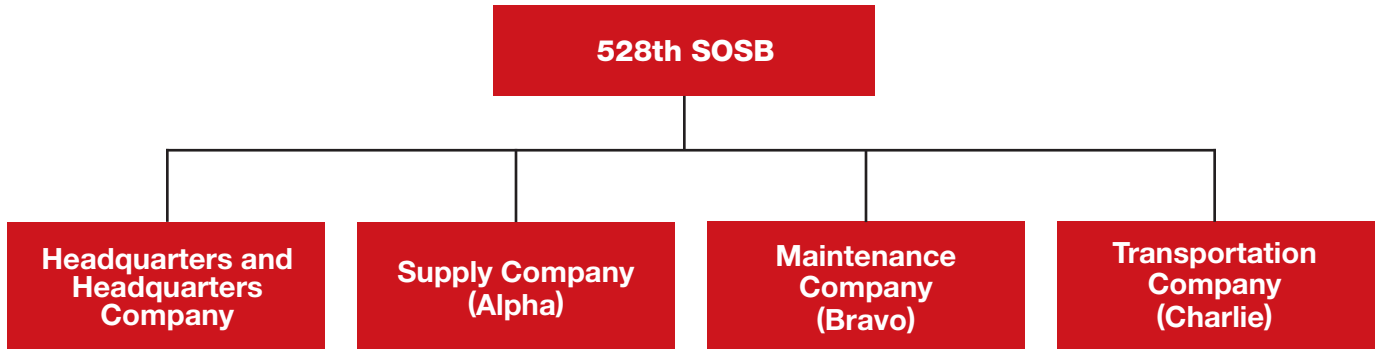
528th SOSB beret flash



1st SOCOM SSI



528th Special Operations Support Battalion 1990



ama but, like many USASOC units, had not yet been tested by an extended, large-scale deployment. It would now get that opportunity, due in part to deficiencies in the USCENTCOM plan for supporting ARSOF during contingency operations. Between August 1990 and March 1991, 155 soldiers – 96 percent of the 528th’s total strength – deployed to the USCENTCOM area of operational responsibility (AOR). Their actions there ensured the battalion’s survival.

Planning and Deployment

Inclusion in USSOUTHCOM plans, prior to JUST CAUSE, allowed the 528th SOSB to stage equipment

and rehearse with supported ARSOF elements.¹¹ Nothing of this nature existed for USCENTCOM.¹² As a result, the 528th’s role in DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM was largely an exercise in improvisation.

Existing plans and doctrine gave SOCCENT, the theater special operations command for USCENTCOM, operational control (OPCON) of all ARSOF in theater. However, it was not responsible for their logistical support. That responsibility fell to U.S. Army Central Command (ARCENT), the Army Service Component Command (ASCC) for USCENTCOM.¹³ ARCENT’s plans called for a mobilized U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) Army Support Group (ASG) to support ARSOF during

During Operation JUST CAUSE, a team of eleven 528th soldiers ran a Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP) from Howard Air Force Base, near Panama City, Panama. Here, a UH-60 Black Hawk is seen departing the FARP.

(Image credit: David Stewart)



“Proving the Concept”:
The 528th Support Battalion in Panama



President George H.W. Bush spoke out forcefully against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, declaring that the aggression “will not stand.”

contingency operations.¹⁴ However, the planned ASG could not arrive in theater for at least seven weeks after the SOF units it was to support, a problem identified by SOCCENT at a March 1990 planning conference.¹⁵ Finally, the SOF element intended to coordinate ARSOF logistics in the USCENTOM AOR, 5th Special Operations Support Command (SOSC), would not activate until October 1990, which was too late to have any impact on DESERT SHIELD.¹⁶

On 7 August 1990, U.S. President George H.W. Bush ordered the deployment of U.S. forces to Saudi Arabia to deter further Iraqi aggression. COL Jesse Johnson and his staff immediately began making preparations for a SOCCENT-Forward headquarters (HQ) on the Arabian Peninsula.¹⁷ Knowing the weaknesses in the ARCENT support plan, he asked Lieutenant General (LTG) Michael F. Spigelmire, Commanding General, USASOC, for the 528th SOSB, being familiar with its recent contributions during JUST CAUSE.¹⁸ 1st SOCOM, the 528th’s higher headquarters, recommended deployment two days later.¹⁹

LTC Norman A. Gebhard, 528th SOSB Command-



Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

er, alerted his battalion, which immediately began preparing to deploy to Saudi Arabia. One junior officer recalled the soldiers being too consumed by the task at hand to worry about what lay ahead. Instead, the prevailing sentiment among the troops was that Iraq, which fielded the fourth largest army in the world at the time, “didn’t know what it was getting into.”²⁰

When LTC Gebhard assumed command of the 528th in July 1990, it was his second consecutive SOF assignment on Fort Bragg. However, he had spent the first fifteen years of his career in the conventional Army, experience that would serve him well during the upcoming deployment. He was aided by battalion Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Otis W. Norfleet, a JUST CAUSE veteran who had been the battalion CSM since mid-1988. Joining him were fellow Panama veterans Major (MAJ) Randy R. Heyward (Executive Officer), Captain (CPT) Robert T. Davis (S-3, Operations Officer), CPT Mark A. Olinger (Support Operations Officer), CPT John M. Gargaro (Commander, HHC), and Sergeant First Class (SFC) James E. Boone (S-4, Non-commissioned Officer-in-Charge [NCOIC]).²¹ Their combined experience made it possible to deploy the entire battalion into a largely unknown environment in less than a month and then hit the ground running.



U.S. Army, Central (ARCENT) SSI



5th Special Operations Support Command (SOSC) beret flash

528th MISSION ESSENTIAL TASK LIST

Echelon: Battalion

PRIORITY	TASK
1	Provide dedicated logistical direct support.
2	Provide unit level logistics support.
3	Provide command and control for assigned/attached units (Engineer, Security, Graves Registration, Decontamination).
4	Deploy by air, land, sea, and rail.
5	Provide for internal defense.
6	Operate in a Nuclear, Biological, or Chemical (NBC) environment.

Echelon: Headquarters Company

1	Provide unit-level medical support.
2	Provide food service support.
3	Provide interim staff coordination for graves registration.
4	Provide classes of supply I, II, IV, VII, and VIII.
5	Provide classes of supply I, II, IV, VII, VIII transfer and transship operations.
6	Coordinate with Civil Affairs for services (laundry, bath, potable water, etc.) which are not provided by augmentation.
7	Provide Headquarters Commandant services.

Echelon: Supply Detachment

1	Provide combat/demand supported Authorized Stockage Lists (ASL) for SOF-peculiar equipment and limited conventional support systems.
2	Operate forward-based refuel/rearm supply points for deployed ARSOF aviation and ground elements.
3	Operate forward-based ammunition supply points, including special ammunition (for 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment).
4	Provide unit level Class III support.

Echelon: Maintenance Detachment

1	Provide intermediate direct support maintenance (Weapons, Automotive, Engineer).
2	Provide unit level maintenance support.
3	Provide Class VII Operational Readiness Float (ORF) for selected special and conventional equipment (Ranger).

Echelon: Transportation Detachment

1	Provide movement control for sea, land, rail, and air (Airfield Departure/Arrival Control Group) movements.
2	Provide short-haul transportation support.

(Image credit: NARA)



The C-5 Galaxy, seen here offloading troops in Saudi Arabia, was the largest cargo aircraft in the USAF inventory.



(Image credit: NARA)

Some 528th SOSB personnel and equipment deployed to Saudi Arabia aboard a USAF C-5, like the one pictured here.

(Image credit: NARA)



Most 528th soldiers deployed out of Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, on one of several USAF C-141 Starlifter cargo aircraft, like those seen here. The C-141 has since been replaced by the C-17 Globemaster.

Still, a battalion-sized deployment was a new experience for all involved and was not without difficulty. To accomplish the task, the 528th embedded Staff Sergeant (SSG) Ronald Jackson, its Air Movement Officer, at Pope Air Force Base (AFB), North Carolina, to coordinate air load planning.²² It also received invaluable assistance from the USAF as it jockeyed with XVIII Airborne Corps units for limited space on outbound aircraft heading for Saudi Arabia.²³

The battalion began deploying from Pope AFB on 29 August, on a combination of C-5 Galaxy and C-141 Starlifter aircraft. Most arrived at King Fahd International Airport (KFIA), located on the Persian Gulf coast near the city of Dammam, within a few days, although the C-5 lagged behind the C-141s, due to maintenance issues.²⁴ On 8 September, the 528th SOSB became the first ARSOF unit to complete its deployment (“close theater”), despite not having been previously force-listed on USCENTCOM contingency plans.²⁵ It left behind a small rear detachment of eight personnel at Fort Bragg, led by First Lieutenant (1LT) Janette L. Skowron.²⁶

DESERT SHIELD

The earliest days of Operation DESERT SHIELD were chaotic and tense. Though growing daily, the U.S. presence in Saudi Arabia was miniscule, compared to the massive concentration of Iraqi troops in Kuwait.²⁷ The XVIII Airborne Corps and SOF elements that arrived first were sent to deter further Iraqi aggression, but were not equipped to stop a potential Iraqi armored thrust into Saudi Arabia. The resulting “window of vulnerability” necessitated the development of what CPT Davis termed a “run-away plan.”²⁸ The much-anticipated arrival of U.S. Army armored units in October, with their state-of-the-art M1A1 Abrams tanks and M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, eliminated the need for a quick evacuation plan.²⁹

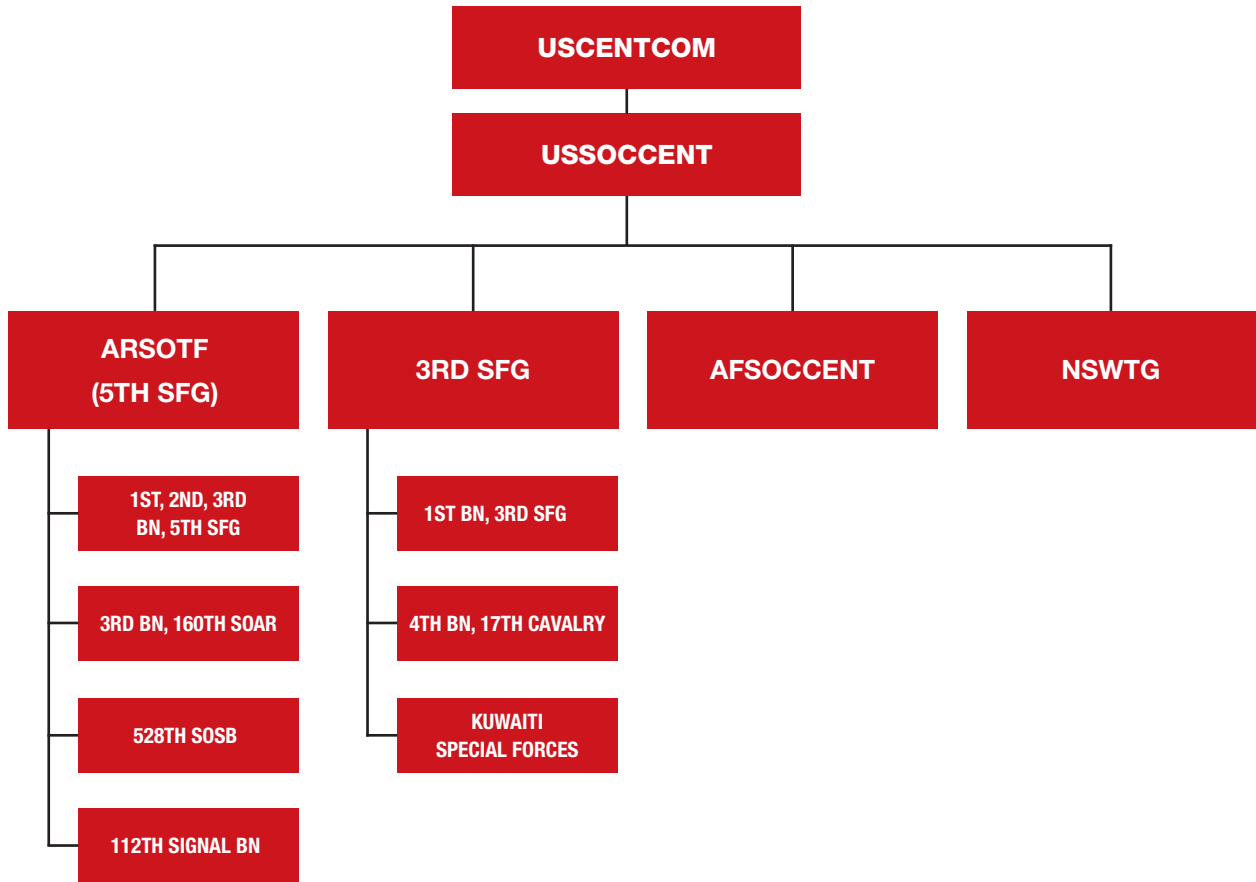
At KFIA, the 528th linked up with lead elements from 5th Special Forces Group (SFG), and bedded down in the unfinished airport’s extensive underground facilities.³⁰ The 5th Special Forces Operational Base (SFOB), as 5th SFG headquarters was known, formed the core of an Army Special Operations Task Force (ARSOTF), commanded by COL James W. Kraus (Commander, 5th SFG). The ARSOTF in turn fell under SOCCENT and was collocated at KFIA.³¹

SOCCENT assigned the 528th SOSB responsibility for providing direct support to ARSOF units at both KFIA and the other main ARSOF staging base, King Khalid Military City (KKMC), approximately 350 miles to the northwest.³² Soldiers from the 528th supported the HQ, ARSOTF (5th SFOB); 1st



Special Forces SSI

Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT) during DESERT SHIELD/STORM



MILITARY CLASSES OF SUPPLY	
Class I	Subsistence
Class II	Clothing, Individual Equipment, Tools, Administrative Supplies
Class III	Petroleum, Oils, and Lubricants
Class IV	Construction Materials
Class V	Ammunition
Class VI	Personal Demand Items
Class VII	Major End Items: Vehicles, Weapons, Electronics
Class VIII	Medical Materials
Class IX	Repair Parts
Class X	Material for Non-military Programs

528TH SOSB EQUIPMENT LIST FOR DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM	
NOMENCLATURE	QUANTITY
5-ton Tractor Truck	1
5-ton Cargo Truck	23
2½-ton Cargo Truck	5
5/4-ton Utility Truck	11
3/4-ton Utility Truck	1
5-ton Wrecker	1
10,000-pound Forklift	3
4,000-pound Forklift	2
Forward Area Refuel Equipment	3
Fuel System Supply Point	1.5
Water Trailer	8
Mobile Kitchen Trailer	4
NBC Shelter	4
Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit (ROWPU)	5

Battalion, 5th SFG (Forward Operational Base [FOB] 51); SOCCENT–Forward; Naval Special Warfare Task Group (NSWTG) 1, consisting of two SEAL teams and a special boat unit; and elements from two Psychological Operations (PSYOP) battalions.³³ The 528th supplied Class I (meals-ready-to-eat [MREs], meals operationally ready-to-eat [MOREs], T-rations, supplements, and bottled water), and Class VI (male and female sundry packs).³⁴ It utilized the Standard Army Retail Supply System (SARSS) to requisition Classes II, III, V, VII, and IX for supported units.³⁵ It drew and issued ammunition, replenishing the 5th SFG basic load several times, and obtained approximately 50,000 rounds of AK-47 ammunition for coalition partners.³⁶ Lastly, it maintained an air line of communication (ALOC) with ARSOF at KKMC.³⁷

Heavy equipment was initially scarce at KFIA. Fortunately, the 528th brought “everything but the kitchen sink” with them, according to CPT Olinger.³⁸ Most mission essential equipment had accompanied the troops by air, while less essential or oversized equipment travelled by sea.³⁹ This allowed the battalion to make an immediate impact, and CPT Davis recalled their M816 5-ton wrecker and 10,000-pound capacity (10k) forklift being especially valuable.⁴⁰ “They [the 528th] came in ready to go,” said Col. Brazil, the SOCCENT Deputy.⁴¹

Just five days after it closed theater, a SOCCENT Logistics Assessment, dated 13 September 1990, noted, “the 528th Support Battalion continues to provide outstanding support to ARSOF units,” mentioning that it had just received its first pallet of supplies, via air, from the continental U.S. (CONUS).⁴² A week later, the 528th received and signed for fifty-four Global Positioning System (GPS) units, which it transported to



(image credit: NARA)

528th SOSB soldiers arrived at King Fahd International Airport in early September 1990 with much needed heavy equipment, including a 10,000 pound-capacity (10k) forklift. A smaller, 4,000-pound capacity forklift is seen here, unloading supplies in Saudi Arabia.

forward-located SF units.⁴³ However, when it came to supplies, the first few weeks of DESERT SHIELD consisted of a lot of scavenging. CPT Davis recalled SSG Jackson spending considerable time in the lost pallet yard, searching for anything useful. Meanwhile, the 528th’s cooks went directly to the docks to retrieve Class I (food and water), lest it not find its way to KFIA, through normal supply channels.⁴⁴

These supplies were ferried between the King Abdul Aziz Seaport, near Dammam, and ARSOF bas-

Transportation Company soldiers perch on the hood of a M923 5-ton truck during a rare moment of downtime. The 528th’s truck drivers logged over a quarter million miles in support of ARSOF missions during DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM.



(image credit: Jeremy Sellers)

The M923 5-ton cargo truck, seen here in garrison, was the workhorse of the 528th SOSB Transportation Company during Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, and performed superbly in the harsh desert conditions.



(image credit: Louis G. Mason)



528th SOSB truck drivers ferried supplies to remote border outposts, manned by U.S. Army Special Forces soldiers.

es at KFIA and KKMC by the 528th’s Transportation Company, which deployed with twenty-three M923A2 5-ton cargo trucks and five M35A2C 2½-ton trucks.⁴⁵ These seldom sat idle, due to limited organic transportation assets in the supported ARSOF units, including 5th SFG, which was responsible for manning dozens of border outposts. Delivering food, water, and ammunition to these remote outposts required the company’s truck drivers to traverse hundreds of miles of desert each trip.⁴⁶ The company deployed with roughly thirty truck drivers (military occupational specialty 88M), but the high operational tempo led the 528th to request augmentation from non-deploying units on Fort Bragg, resulting in the addition of approximately forty personnel.⁴⁷

All of those miles, combined with the intense heat and desert sand, kept the 528th’s Maintenance Company busy. Tire blowouts and overheating engines were constant threats, sometimes necessitating recovery using the lone 5-ton wrecker.⁴⁸ As if performing unit-level maintenance for the 528th, and direct support maintenance to the ARSOTE, were not enough, SOCCENT also tasked it to support NSWGTG 1, which lacked an organic maintenance capability.⁴⁹ The maintenance section had to overcome several obstacles, in order to complete these missions, including a shortage of repair parts, grueling temperatures that forced it to shut down operations for several hours in the afternoon, and frequent “Scud alerts,” that brought work to a grinding halt.⁵⁰

The 528th brought a M816 5-ton wrecker, pictured here at Fort Bragg, NC. Over the course of the deployment, it ran dozens of recovery missions for ARSOF vehicles, often resulting from the harsh desert conditions.



“Scud Alert!”

The 528th SOSB did not take any casualties during Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, but it had its share of run-ins with Iraq’s most infamous weapon of the war: the Scud missile. Though not effective as a military weapon due to its inaccuracy, Scuds allowed Iraq to project force, and inspire terror.¹ Major U.S. bases and staging areas in Saudi Arabia were well within the Scud’s reach. For 528th soldiers at King Khalid Military City (KKMC) and King Fahd International Airport (KFIA), “Scud alerts” became a part of life.

Iraq had made extensive use of the basic Soviet-made Scud surface-to-surface missile during its eight-year war with neighboring Iran (1980-88). By 1990, the Iraqis had developed two enhanced variants of the 1950s-era weapon. The Al-Husayn had a range of 373 miles, and the Al-Hijarah could reach targets 466 miles away. Both Scud variants could carry high explosive, chemical, or nerve agent warheads.²

During Operation DESERT STORM, a total of 88 Scuds were fired from fixed site or mobile launchers in western Iraq: 42 towards Israel and 46 at Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states.³ Most Scuds aimed at U.S. troops missed their targets, or were intercepted by the U.S. Army Patriot Defender missile defense system. However, on 25 February 1991, a Scud struck a barracks housing the Army’s 475th Quartermaster Group (Provisional), in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, killing 28 US soldiers and wounding almost 100 more. It was the single deadliest Iraqi attack of the entire war.

The 528th was more fortunate, although Scud alerts frequently sent soldiers scurrying for cover and grasping for their protective gear. One such incident occurred in early February 1991, when four separate Iraqi Scud missile attacks – nine missiles, in all – targeted KKMC. All 528th soldiers, including those outside the wire running transportation missions at the time of the attack, escaped unharmed. Still, Captain Mark Olinger remembers it being “too close for comfort.”⁴

Endnotes

- 1 Iraq targeted Israeli civilians with dozens of Scuds, in an ultimately unsuccessful effort to provoke an Israeli response that, in turn, would cause Arab members of the U.S.-led coalition to withdraw their support.
- 2 U.S. Department of Defense, “Final Report to Congress: Conduct of the Persian Gulf War,” April 1992, USSOCOM History and Research Office, MacDill AFB, FL, 53-54.
- 3 “Conduct of the Persian Gulf War,” 219.
- 4 COL (Ret.) Mark A. Olinger, interview with Christopher E. Howard, 17 June 2020, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.

(image credit: MARPA)



(image credit: Louis G. Mason)



(image credit: MARPA)



Top: Military personnel work at the site where an Iraqi Scud missile attack on 25 February 1991, killed 28 Army Reserve personnel and wounded in 100 others. The building housed the 475th Quartermaster Group (Provisional). **Middle:** Training in Mission-Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP) gear while in garrison helped prepare 528th soldiers to react to the threat of chemically-armed Scud missiles, during Operation DESERT STORM. **Bottom:** Military personnel examine a Scud missile shot down in the desert by an MIM-104 Patriot tactical air defense missile during Operation DESERT STORM.



The steady influx of ARSOF units into Saudi Arabia led LTC Gebhard to send a task-organized Forward Area Support Team (FAST), consisting of 35-40 soldiers, to the sprawling KKMC complex in mid-September. This new Saudi military facility housed 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 5th SFG (FOB 52 and FOB 53, respectively), and 3rd Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (3/160th SOAR), among others.⁵¹ It offered outstanding facilities: dormitory-style living quarters, an excellent dining facility, showers, maintenance shops, and a well-lit, paved motor pool.⁵² However, these luxuries came at the price of more oversight from the Saudi Ministry of Defense.⁵³

Commanded by CPT Rodney O. Griffin, the Supply Company Commander, the FAST provided ARSOF units at KKMC with food, water, ammunition, and fuel. The Supply Company set up and operated a fuel point from a Saudi motor pool, and a fuel system supply point for both SOF (3/160th) and conventional aviation assets. The 528th drew and issued the ammunition, and the receiving units had responsibility for storing it. It also requisitioned supplies, provided direct support transportation and maintenance, maintained ALOC between KKMC and KFIA, and established an Arrival/Departure Airfield Control Group (A/DACG) for SOF.⁵⁴ Twelve 528th fuelers participated in a Forward

The UH-60 Black Hawk, seen here, and the SOF variant, the MH-60, saw extensive action in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM.



Fuel System Supply Point (FSSP) equipment, seen here on display at Fort Bragg, NC, had a considerably larger capacity than the more compact and transportable Forward Area Refueling Equipment (FARE). Both systems were used in Saudi Arabia.



(Image credit: Stephan R. Anderson)



A small team from the 528th was assigned a water purification mission, using four 600 gallon-per-hour Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Units (ROWPUs). They set up their ROWPUs at an oasis in the vicinity of Dammam, Saudi Arabia.



(Image credit: Stephan R. Anderson)

SGT Stephen R. Anderson, pictured here at the ROWPU site, was the Headquarters Company Supply Sergeant. Early in DESERT SHIELD, he was tabbed to be the NCOIC for the water purification mission.

(Image credit: Stephan R. Anderson)



Purified water produced by the 528th ROWPU team was transported to remote SOF locations via 500-gallon blivets, slung under CH-47 helicopters.

Arming and Refueling Point (FARP) training exercise with 3/160th SOAR, from 31 October to 7 November 1990.⁵⁵ This training would pay off later, during DESERT STORM, when the refuel capacity of the 528th was stretched to the limit.

Despite being overextended in its core mission areas of supply, maintenance, and transportation, the 528th was assigned other missions, for which it was less prepared. For example, USASOC tasked the battalion with performing a water purification mission, and issued it four 600 gallon-per-hour Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Units (ROWPUs) shortly before deployment.⁵⁶ Once in theater, LTC Gebhard entrusted this mission to 1LT John M. Sheckler, who assembled an ad hoc team of Headquarters and Supply Company soldiers.⁵⁷ Ser-

geant Stephen R. Anderson, normally the HHC supply sergeant, served as his NCOIC.⁵⁸ After setting up their ROWPUs at a desert oasis between KFIA and Dammam, they produced an estimated 3,000 gallons of potable water per day, before shutting down operations in December 1990.⁵⁹ This water was then transported to remote ARSOF elements in 500-gallon blivets, sling-loaded under CH-47 Chinook helicopters. Despite the improvised nature of the mission, the 528th demonstrated an ability, as CPT Olinger saw it, “to fill a capability gap, without burdening the rest of ARSOF.”⁶⁰

Transition to DESERT STORM

On 29 November 1990, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 678, giving Saddam Hussein until 15 January 1991 to withdraw his forces from Kuwait, and authorizing the use of force if he did not comply.⁶¹ Within a month, the 528th SOSB relocated its main body of about 150 soldiers forward to KKMC, to better support offensive operations to liberate Kuwait. In turn, the FAST, which had been at KKMC since late September, replaced the main body at KFIA.⁶²

From KKMC, the 528th supported the same units the FAST had supported, plus the 112th Signal Battalion, and VII and XVIII Corps aviation units.⁶³ It provided food, water, fuel, and ammunition, and requisitioned Classes II, III, IV, VII, and IX. It also provided ALOC from KFIA, direct support maintenance and transportation, and water production and distribution.⁶⁴

The 528th’s fuelers went from relative novices to experts within a few days in mid-January 1991, when they set up and operated a FARP to support aviation units from both XVIII Airborne Corps and VII Corps, which

were repositioning to support the DESERT STORM ground offensive.⁶⁵ Over four hundred AH-64 Apaches, AH-1 Cobras, UH-60 Black Hawks, CH-47 Chinooks, and OH-58 Kiwas transitioned through KKMC. For several days, the fuel section pumped as much as forty thousand gallons of aviation fuel.⁶⁶

CPT Griffin's FAST, now at KFIA, picked up the mission of supporting 5th SFOB (HQ, ARSOTF), FOB 51, and HQ, SOCCENT, along with providing limited support to 3rd SFG and attached units.⁶⁷ It supplied food, water, and ammunition, and requisitioned Classes II, III, IV, VII, and IX. It provided ALOC to KKMC, along with direct support maintenance and transportation.⁶⁸ This arrangement, with the main body at KKMC and the FAST at KFIA, continued after Operation DESERT STORM commenced on 16 January 1991.⁶⁹

When the U.S.-led coalition advanced into Kuwait and Iraq, starting on 24 February, the 528th sent a second FAST, under the command of MAJ Harold 'Hal' Walker, to Kuwait City International Airport (KCIA).⁷⁰ From there, it supported ARSOF elements that had advanced with the ground offensive.⁷¹ It established a FARP, using a combination of East German and HEMTT tankers. It also provided food, water, ammunition, limited direct support transportation support, and ALOC from KMMC to KCIA.⁷²

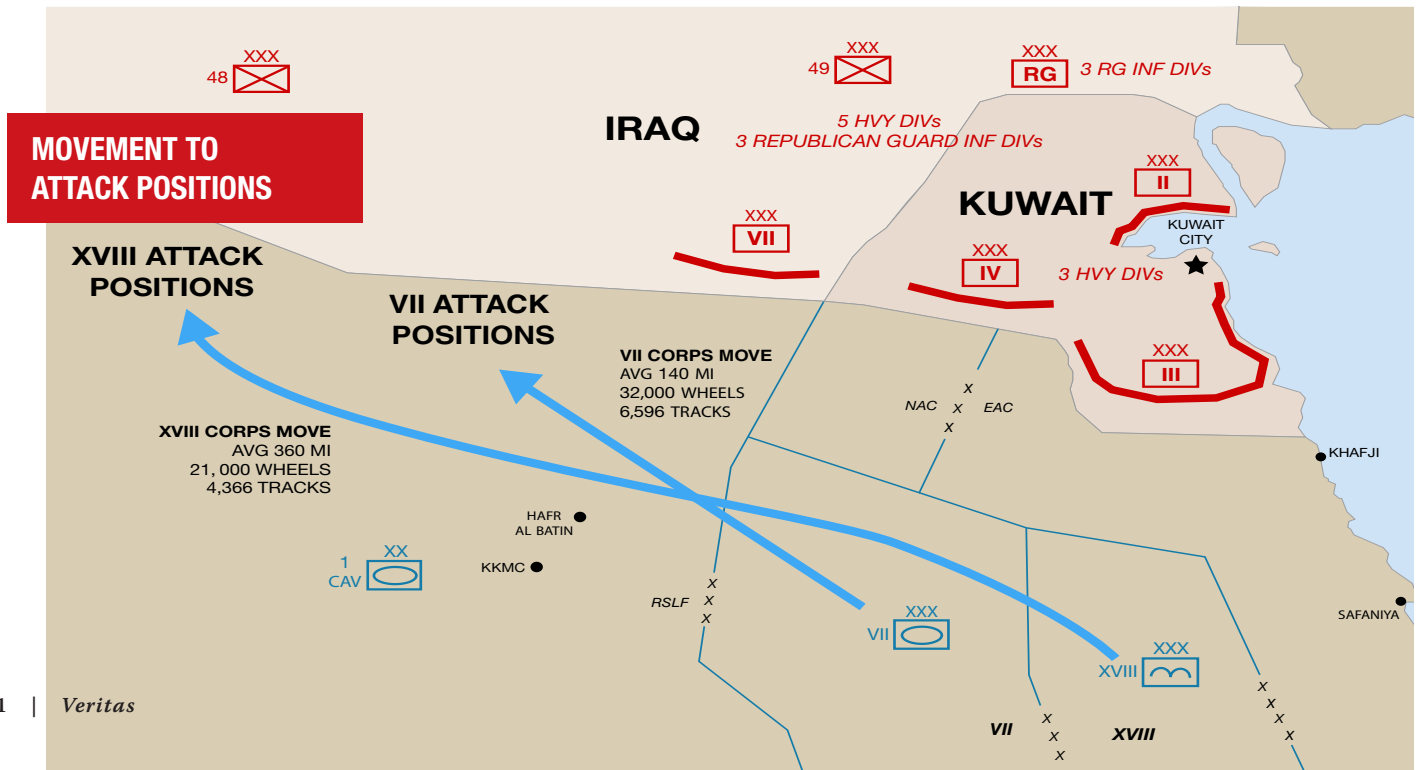
With no prospect of holding onto occupied Kuwait, Iraq agreed to a ceasefire on 28 February 1991. The 528th SOSB began redeploying to Fort Bragg the next month. In the six months since it arrived in Saudi Arabia, the 528th provided 500,000 MREs, 175,000 T-Rations, and 600,000 gallons of bottled water. It dispensed

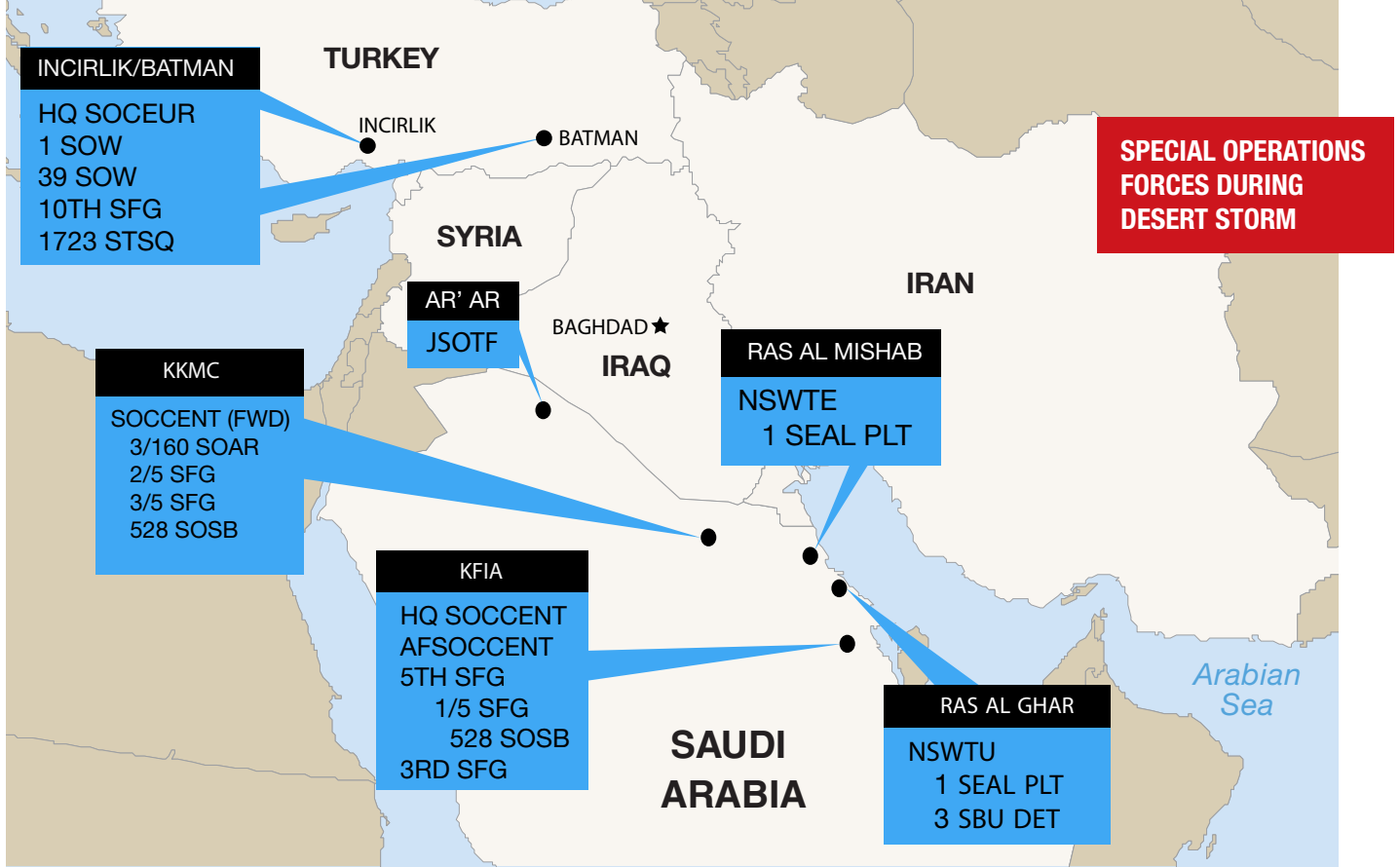


(Images credit: NARA)

589,000 gallons of Jet A-1 fuel, 57,997 gallons of diesel, and 125,551 gallons of MOGAS. It drew and issued 303.39 short tons of ammunition. It filled 20,601 of the 23,765 requisitions it received (86.69 percent). It transshipped 7,584 short tons via ground, and 2,070 short tons via air. Its drivers transported 14,416 personnel,

In January 1991, coalition forces began repositioning westward, in preparation for the ground offensive against Iraq. GEN Schwarzkopf's strategy called for a "left hook" that would catch the Iraqis off guard, allowing for a swifter victory.





(Image credit: NARA)



Retreating Iraqi troops set fire to Kuwaiti oil wells, severely limiting visibility and causing it to literally rain oil.

(Image credit: Jeremy Sellers)



A 528th SOSB soldier snapped this photo on his way to Kuwait City.

driving a total of 275,340 miles. At KKMC, its Arrival/Departure Airfield Control Group directed 198 total cargo aircraft, most of which were C-130s (145) travelling intra-theater.⁷³ Its mechanics received 272 jobs, completing 263 (97 percent).⁷⁴

Conclusion

The numbers were certainly impressive, but the impact the 528th SOSB went beyond the numbers. It was in the right place, at the right time, with the right equipment, skill sets, and adaptability to fill the CSS gap for ARSOF. COL Donald W. Betts, Chief of Logistics (J-4), SOCCENT, during the war, wrote in a U.S. Army War College paper, “Without [the 528th’s] expertise and responsive support, ARSOF would not have been able to accomplish their missions.”⁷⁵ COL Jesse Johnson was even more succinct: “We would have been in dire straits without them.”⁷⁶

This sentiment was shared by members of the 528th. CPT Mark Olinger, Support Operations Officer, referred to Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM as a “high-water mark for the battalion,” adding, “had we not been there, it would have been an entirely different picture for the ARSOTF and other SOF we supported.”⁷⁷ SGT Stephen Anderson, who served as NCOIC for ROWPU operations before advancing into Kuwait City with MAJ Walker’s FAST, expressed great pride in the unit’s accomplishments. “[We] did a fantastic job.”⁷⁸

Following the war, the Army awarded the 528th SOSB




His ROWPU mission complete, SGT Anderson joined MAJ Hal Walker's FAST for the push into Kuwait. He is seen here near the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait City.

the Valorous Unit Award, with streamer embroidered IRAQ-KUWAIT 1991. The 528th also earned campaign credit for both the Defense of Saudi Arabia and Liberation and Defense of Kuwait.⁷⁹ More importantly, its contributions to Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM reinforced the value of a dedicated, rapidly deployable ARSOF CSS unit, settling the inactivation question.⁸⁰

While 528th was deployed to Saudi Arabia, USASOC completed the review of ARSOF CSS review, commissioned by GEN Lindsay in March 1990. Four months into DESERT SHIELD, it was clear that the 528th SOSB support was invaluable to ARSOF, but the battalion was stretched beyond its capacity.⁸¹ USASOC proposed quadrupling the battalion's size to 724 soldiers, judged sufficient to support major contingencies in two different theaters.⁸² Although later pared back to 400, it still represented 150 percent growth.⁸³

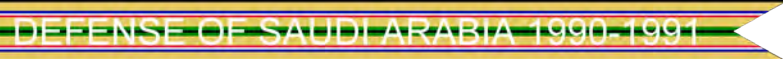
In the years immediately following DESERT STORM, the expanded 528th SOSB reorganized into a headquarters company and two robust multifunctional forward support companies (FSCs). It supported ARSOF "to the utmost" in the Balkans, Haiti, Africa, and elsewhere. After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the

528th deployed in support of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM. It was inactivated in 2005, as part of broad realignment of ARSOF CSS capabilities. Since 2008, its lineage lives on in the 528th Sustainment Brigade (Special Operations). 

Takeaways:

- 1** Though unplanned, 528th SOSB support to the ARSOTF and SOCCENT was critical to mission success during DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM.
- 2** The 528th was stretched extremely thin for the duration of the conflict, operating out of multiple locations, and supporting a wide array of SOF and conventional forces.
- 3** 528th SOSB contributions to Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama led the Army to postpone its activation, but its excellent performance in Operation DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM secured its existence for another fifteen years.

Acknowledgments: The author would like to thank COL (Ret.) Mark A. Olinger, LTC (Ret.) Robert T. Davis, and Stephen R. Anderson for making this article possible.



Endnotes

- Facsimile sent to John Partin, 13 May 1998, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) History and Research Office, MacDill Air Force Base (AFB), FL.
- Colonel (COL) Jesse L. Johnson, interview with John W. Partin, 30 April 1991, USSOCOM History and Research Office, MacDill AFB, FL.
- Col. Douglas Brazil (USAF) interview with John W. Partin, 7 March 1991, USSOCOM History and Research Office, MacDill AFB, FL, hereafter Brazil interview, 7 March 1991.
- Works consulted for this article include** Rick Atkinson, *Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993); Kevin M. Woods, *The Mother of All Battles: Saddam Hussein's Strategic Plan for the Persian Gulf War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2008); H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Jr., *It Doesn't Take a Hero* (New York: Linda Grey Bantam Books, 1992); U.S. Army Center of Military History, *War in the Persian Gulf: Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, August 1990 – March 1991* (Washington, D.C.: United States Army, 2010); Robert H. Scales, Jr., et al., *Certain Victory* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Staff, United States Army, 1993); Frank N. Schubert and Theresa L. Kraus, eds., *The Whirlwind War: The United States Army in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1995).
- Unpublished histories consulted include** USASOC History Office, "Army Special Operations in Operations DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM (DRAFT)," undated, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, 104-105; USASOC Directorate of History and Museums, "A Short History of Special Operations Support," undated, USSOCOM History and Research Office, MacDill AFB, FL, 46-50; Richard W. Stewart, "Appendix J: Special Operations Forces," in U.S. Department of Defense, "Final Report to Congress: Conduct of the Persian Gulf War," April 1992, USSOCOM History and Research Office, MacDill AFB, FL, J-18 – J-19; Richard W. Stewart, Stanley L. Sandler, and Joseph R. Fischer, *Command History of the United States Army Special Operations Command: 1987-1992: Standing Up the MACOM* (Fort Bragg, NC: USASOC Directorate of History and Museums, 1996), 77-83.
- The notable exception is the account provided in Chapter Three of an undated and uncredited manuscript entitled "SOSCOM History Book," dating to 2003-2004. It provides a brief, but descriptive, narrative account of the 528th in DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM, incorporating interviews with junior officers, non-commissioned officers, and other enlisted soldiers. It is quoted herein, but only after the excerpts cited were independently verified.**
- John W. Partin, "Special Operations Forces in Operations EARNEST WILL and PRIME CHANCE," April 1988, USSOCOM History and Research Office, MacDill AFB, FL; COL (Ret.) Mark A. Olinger, interview with Christopher E. Howard, 13 May 2020, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- Department of the Army, U.S. Army Forces Command, "Permanent Orders 79-6," 11 May 1989, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC. **The reasons for the inactivation decision are not clear, but competing proposals for how to best sustain ARSOF, under consideration at the time, depended on harvesting the 528th's 163 billets.**
- For more on the 528th SOSB in Operation JUST CAUSE, see** Christopher E. Howard, "Proving the Concept: the 528th Support Battalion in Panama," *Veritas: Journal of U.S. Army Special Operations History* 15:1 (2019): 52-58.
- General Robert W. Riscassi, Memorandum for Commander-in-Chief, Special Operations Command, "SUBJECT: Recent Decisions Concerning Special Operations Force Structure," 12 March 1990, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- Howard, "Proving the Concept," 53-54. **This role was expanded after JUST CAUSE started, due to identified shortfall in ARSOF CSS.**
- USCENTCOM was in the process of revising its primary contingency plan in the summer of 1990.**
- COL Donald W. Betts, "U.S. Army War College Paper: Logistical Support of Special Operations Forces During Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM," Carlisle Barracks, PA (1992), 3, on internet at https://archive.org/details/DTIC_ADA251754, hereafter Betts, page number.
- Betts, 8. **This was consistent with FM 31-20, Doctrine for Special Operations, 20 April 1990. ARSOF was considered an Echelon Above Corps force, for sustainment purposes.**
- Betts, 8. **Compounding the problem was that USSOCCENT headquarters relied on U.S. Air Force Central Command (USCENTAF) to meet its logistical requirements, but that organization's logistics capacity was stretched thin by the rapid USAF build-up in Saudi Arabia, during the initial stage of DESERT SHIELD.**
- COL Jesse L. Johnson, interview with John W. Partin, 3 May 1991, USSOCOM History and Research Office, MacDill AFB, FL, hereafter Johnson interview, 3 May 1991.
- Brazil interview, 7 March 1991. **SOCCENT-Forward initially went to Riyadh, the Saudi capital, but relocated to King Fahd International Airport (KFIA) a few days later, due to overcrowding.**
- Betts, 28-29; Johnson interview, 3 May 1991.
- "528th SOSB, 1991 Annual History Report," copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter 528th SOSB AHR, 1991. **1st SOCOM was then in the process of standing down, as the U.S. Army Special Forces Command (USASFC) prepared for a November 1990 activation.**
- LTC (Ret.) Robert T. Davis, interview with Christopher E. Howard, 3 March 2021, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Davis interview, 3 March 2021.
- COL (Ret.) Mark A. Olinger email to Christopher E. Howard, "SUBJECT: Re: 528th in DS/DS," 20 October 2020, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC. **Other key leaders were Company A (Supply) Commander: CPT Rodney O. Griffin; Company B (Maintenance) Commander: CPT Desmond Keyes; Company C (Transportation) Commander: 1LT Kyle Fugate.**
- COL (Ret.) Mark A. Olinger, interview with Christopher E. Howard, 17 June 2020, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Olinger interview, 17 June 2020.
- Davis interview, 3 March 2021.
- Davis interview, 3 March 2021; Mark A. Olinger email to Christopher E. Howard, "SUBJECT: Re: 528th in DS/DS Draft," 15 April 2021, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC. **According to Olinger, "Although under construction, KFIA offered many advantages over an undeveloped desert location. Water, although non potable; was available, as was access to international telephone lines for C2 and SARSS use; runways could be used by both military and commercial aircraft; and the terminal uncompleted infrastructure could be used for C2, supply points, and billeting."**
- "528th Support Battalion Lessons Learned – OPERATION DESERT SHIELD," undated, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter 528th SOSB Lessons Learned, DESERT SHIELD.
- Olinger interview, 17 June 2020.
- Davis interview, 3 March 2021. **Davis recalls a massive explosion at KFIA that sent everyone scrambling for cover. At first, it was assumed to be an enemy missile attack, but was later determined to be the result of an accident.**
- "Conduct of the Persian Gulf War," 81-82; Davis interview, 3 March 2021.
- Davis interview, 3 March 2021. **LTC Gebhard had Davis, his S-3, track the arrival of conventional forces in theater.**
- 528th SOSB Lessons Learned, DESERT SHIELD. **The lack of a Pre-deployment Site Survey (PDSS), noted in a post-war lesson learned, was a minor inconvenience, given that the 528th arrived in theater ahead of many of the ARSOF units it was to support, which continued to arrive throughout September.**
- Olinger email, 15 April 2021. **LTC Gebhard held battalion formations each Friday morning to update the soldiers on the status of the deployment, recognize soldier accomplishments, and share significant events.**
- COMSOCCENT Message 160910ZSEP90, "SUBJECT: SOCCENT Logistics Architecture," copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 528th SOSB AHR, 1991; Mark A. Olinger email to Christopher E. Howard, "SUBJECT: Strength of elements," 9 February 2021, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC. **528th SOSB troop strength at various locations broken down, by phase of operation: Phase I (SEP to late DEC 90): 128-138 soldiers at KFIA (main body); 25-40 at KKMC (FAST)
Phase II: (Late DEC 90 to late FEB 91): 50-60 at KFIA (FAST); 140 to 150 at KKMC (main body)
Phase III (Late FEB to MAR 91): 50-60 at KFIA (FAST); 100 to 120 at KKMC (main body); 30-40 at KCIA (FAST)**
- 528th SOSB AHR, 1991; Olinger interview, 17 June 2020. **Sundry packs**

- consisted of personal items, such as toiletries, tobacco, and chewing gum.
- 35 528th SOSB AHR, 1991; Olinger interview, 17 June 2020. The 101st Airborne Division had already established a fuel point at KFIA, meaning that the 528th was not asked to provide Class III support.
 - 36 Olinger interview, 17 June 2020.
 - 37 528th SOSB AHR, 1991.
 - 38 Olinger interview, 17 June 2020.
 - 39 Davis interview, 3 March 2021.
 - 40 Davis interview, 3 March 2021.
 - 41 Brazil interview, 7 March 1991. Brazil added that the 528th enabled them to get needed supplies through Army channels (ARCENT), which could then be billed to the Air Force, which bore ultimate responsibility for sustaining HQ, USSOCENT.
 - 42 "SOCCENT Commander's Logistics Assessment," 13 September 1990, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 43 LTC (P) Jimmie F. Holt, USASOC Summary Sheet, "SUBJECT: Operation DESERT SHIELD," 21 September 1990, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 44 Davis interview, 3 March 2021; Olinger email, 15 April 2021. The food initially arrived via prepositioned shipborne stocks, and the water came from a potable water fill point. 1st COSCOM ran the supply points until Theater Army assets were in place (circa November 1990).
 - 45 SOSB Lessons Learned, DESERT SHIELD. The battalion also took five 2 ½-ton M35A2C cargo trucks, but judged the 5-ton M923A2 superior, in most respects. Members of the 528th's Transportation Company agreed with this assessment.
 - 46 SSG Keller, interview with CPT Robert T. Young, 25 June 1991, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Keller interview, 25 June 1991. Drivers (MOS 88M) were escorted at first, until they knew the routes, after which they were on their own.
 - 47 Olinger interview, 17 June 2020. This augmentation pushed the peak deployed strength of the 528th SOSB to 214.
 - 48 1SG Rene Kelly, interview with CPT Robert T. Young, 25 June 1991, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Kelly interview, 25 June 1991. The combination of weather and sand broke down lubricants, increased tire wear, and led to frequent blowouts.
 - 49 Davis interview, 3 March 2021. Davis, who had commanded the Maintenance Company prior to becoming S-3, remembers the Naval Special Warfare element being particularly hard on vehicles.
 - 50 Keller interview, 25 June 1991; Stewart, "Appendix J: Special Operations Forces," J-18. The shortage of repair parts during the first two months of DESERT SHIELD, was partially due to the resulting from the lack of Authorized Stockage Lists (ASLs) for supported units. Fortunately, the 1st Corps Support Command (COSCOM) and the 101st Airborne Division Support Command (DISCOM) were able to provide assistance.
 - 51 3/160th SOAR, commanded by LTC Dell L. Dailey, formed the core of Task Force (TF) 3/160. Elements of 2/160th SOAR rounded out the TF.
 - 52 Kelly interview, 25 June 1991. Other 528th soldiers agreed that the facilities at KKMC were superb, and considerably better than those at KFIA.
 - 53 Mark A. Olinger email to Christopher E. Howard, "SUBJECT: RE: Need Input," 7 April 2021, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Olinger email, 7 April 2021; "SOSCOM History Book," undated, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, 33, hereafter "SOSCOM History Book," page number. "When it was necessary to push up a berm around an aviation refueling location, the construction had to be requested on a work order and the work had to be done by Saudi workers. It took at least three weeks to get the berms constructed."
 - 54 528th SOSB AHR, 1991.
 - 55 "After Action Report: Unilateral FARP Training," undated, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 56 528th SOSB Lessons Learned, DESERT SHIELD. The 528th SOSB Table of Organization & Equipment did not include water purification specialists (MOS 77W), and those assigned the mission received only minimal on-the-job training from 77Ws, prior to deployment.
 - 57 Olinger interview, 17 June 2020. 1LT Sheffler was the Executive Officer, Headquarters Company.
 - 58 Stephen R. Anderson, interview with Christopher E. Howard, 14 January 2020, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 59 Stephen R. Anderson, interview with Christopher E. Howard, 5 May 2020, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Anderson interview 5 May 2020.
 - 60 Olinger interview, 17 June 2020.
 - 61 United Nations Security Council Resolution 678, 29 November 1990, on internet at <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/678>.
 - 62 Olinger interview, 17 June 2020; 528th SOSB AHR, 1991.
 - 63 528th SOSB AHR, 1991. The 112th Signal Battalion arrived in early February 1991. Additionally, the 528th supported USSOCOM Deployment Cell, ARCENT Jump TOC, 5th SFOB Jump TOC from KKMC.
 - 64 528th SOSB AHR, 1991.
 - 65 "SOSCOM History Book," 34. XVIII Airborne Corps was positioning itself for the planned left hook around the Iraqi defenses, which required relocating from Dhahran, on the Persian Gulf, to Rahfa, in western Saudi Arabia.
 - 66 "SOSCOM History Book," 34; Olinger email, 7 April 2021. According to Olinger, "We sustained this for about 3 to 4 days...until the late afternoon of 16 January, when the FARP was essentially down to a few thousand gallons [with] no resupply from theater army. LTC Gebhard and I talked with LTC [Dell] Daily [Commander, 3rd BN, 160th SOAR] and his S-3 Andrew Milani, about the potential impact [and] set an immediate safety level."
 - 67 528th SOSB AHR, 1991. This included 4th Battalion, 17th Cavalry Squadron, 1st Battalion, 3rd SFG, and 3rd SFOB.
 - 68 528th SOSB AHR, 1991.
 - 69 528th SOSB AHR, 1991; Olinger interview, 17 June 2020. 528th operations were not significantly impacted by the initiation of the air war phase of Operation DESERT STORM, which lasted from 16 January through 23 February 1991.
 - 70 Olinger interview, 17 June 2020. MAJ Walker, an Army Aviator with a logistics background, had replaced MAJ Heyward as battalion XO in November.
 - 71 528th SOSB AHR, 1991. These units included: 5th SFOB, 1-5th SFG (FOB 51), 2-5th SFG (FOB 52), 3-5th SFG (FOB 53), 3rd SFOB, and 1-3rd SFG (FOB 31). The FAST also supported 4/17th Cavalry Squadron, U.S. Embassy, SOCCENT Jump Tactical Operations Center (TOC), and Marine Corps Forces Central Command (MARCENT).
 - 72 528th SOSB AHR, 1991; Olinger interview, 17 June 2020. The ammunition, which included over 100,000 rounds of 5.56mm ball, link, and tracer ammo, came from a prepositioned stock of 70 short tons, located in a MARCENT service support area.
 - 73 "SOSCOM History Book," 34; Olinger email, 7 April 2021. The 528th transferred A/DCG mission to a theater army unit in late November/early December, as the theater expanded to receive the VII Corps and supporting elements.
 - 74 528th SOSB AHR, 1991.
 - 75 Betts, 30-31. Betts noted elsewhere, "Army problems were minimized due to the presence and outstanding support provided by the 528th Support Battalion." (JULLS Number 51536-21957, submitted by SOCJ4, LTC Betts, Title: "SOF Logistics Training," 5 June 1991.)
 - 76 COL Jesse L. Johnson, interview with John W. Partin, 29 April 1991, USSOCOM History and Research Office, MacDill AFB, FL, hereafter Johnson interview, 29 April 1991. In a subsequent interview, dated 3 May 1991 (cited above), Johnson explained, "There was no Army element to support [the ARSOTF]...[the 5th SOSB] did not come into existence until October, and then it was very small. The Navy had no such element. What saved me, obviously, was the 528th Special Operations Support Battalion."
 - 77 Olinger interview, 17 June 2020.
 - 78 Anderson interview, 14 January 2020.
 - 79 Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), General Order 7, 2 April 1993, on internet at https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/go9307.pdf; HQDA, General Order 14, 25 June 1993, on internet at https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/go9314.pdf.
 - 80 "Army Special Operations Forces Combat Service Support Review," 17 December 1990, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter ARSOF CSS Review. The study validated the need for larger SOSB, based in part on the 528th's contributions to Operation JUST CAUSE and DESERT

SHIELD, which was still underway when the study concluded.

- 81 Betts, 30; 528th Lessons Learned, DESERT SHIELD; "5th Special Operations Support Command (SOSC) After Action Report," 23 May 1991, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter 5th SOSC AAR. The 528th had required individual augmentation to perform its transportation mission, and was only able to support 3rd SFG, which was not part of the ARSOTF, to a limited degree.
- 82 ARSOF CSS Review; Johnson interview, 29 April 1991; Johnson interview, 3 May 1991. COL Johnson proposed expanding the 528th to brigade size, with a battalion supporting each theater.
- 83 Additional lessons learned noted other deficiencies across the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) spectrum. Support doctrine for ARSOF was not clearly defined or understood. Battalion S-4s and support company commanders

throughout USASOC lacked sufficient logistics training. The 528th did not have the qualified personnel and resources for some of the missions assigned to it (water purification and graves registration, in particular). State-of-the-art refueling equipment was needed, in order to better support Special Operations Aviation. The lack of an ARSOF-specific Materiel Management Center was also noted, as was the lack of demand history for USASOC units not stationed at Fort Bragg. There was clearly room for improvement, and these hard-learned lessons were not neglected. See: 528th SOSB Lessons Learned, DESERT SHIELD; 5th SOSC AAR; LTC Dell L. Dailey, Memorandum For Commander, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, "SUBJECT: After Action Report, Operation Desert Storm," 8 May 1991, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.

(Image credit: Stephan R. Anderson)





THE 75TH RANGER REGIMENT DISTINCTIVE UNIT INSIGNIA

by Troy J. Sacquety

Sergeant First Class Christopher A. Celiz was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for actions while serving with 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment in Afghanistan. He wears the 75th Ranger Regiment DUI on his beret.

Military insignia serve as both unit identifiers and sources of inspiration for those who wear them. They also connect present-day units to their historical predecessors. While insignia may be instantly recognizable, the symbols they contain often require explanation. The description that follows provides historical context for the current U.S. Army 75th Ranger Regiment Distinctive Unit Insignia (DUI). The Ranger Regiment has roots to multiple World War II units, but the story of the DUI itself starts in the Burma campaign.

A British colony, Burma was invaded by the Japanese in early 1942. In order to take back its former territory and to secure India from threat of invasion, the British attempted a number of military operations. The most daring of these was infiltrating a long-range penetration group, known as the Chindits, into Japanese-controlled Burma. Led by Brigadier General Orde Wingate, in February 1943, 3,000 Chindits entered north Burma and succeeded in causing limited damage to the Jap-

anese, but at great cost in personnel casualties.¹ The Chindits, however, secured a propaganda victory by showing that allied units could operate successfully behind enemy lines. This led the U.S. Army to create its own long range penetration group, the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), otherwise known as Merrill's Marauders.

In February 1944, the Marauders began their own campaign in Burma. They were pivotal in seizing the airfield at Myitkyina, in north Burma, and after three months of siege, the city itself. However, that campaign rendered the unit combat ineffective. Because the 5307th was no longer capable of operations, on 10 August 1944, remaining Marauders—along with their unit lineage—were consolidated into the 475th Infantry Regiment (Long Range Penetration, Special), part of the 5332nd Brigade (Provisional), better known as the MARS Task Force. The MARS Task Force was the second U.S. Army long range penetration unit formed for service in Burma in WWII. It was instrumental in seizing the remainder of the Burma Road from Japanese control, opening up a land route to China, and securing north Burma. The 475th, as well as the other component units in the MARS Task Force, were disbanded in China on 1 July 1945.² For nearly a decade, the two U.S. Army long range penetration groups seemingly were just a memory.

That changed on 20 November 1954, with the activation of the 75th Infantry Regiment on Okinawa. The 75th Infantry Regiment in the mid-1950s was not considered a 'Ranger' unit and at the time had no formal ties to the six WWII Ranger Battalions. However, the 75th drew its lineage directly from Merrill's Marauders and the 475th Infantry Regiment. This heritage was reflected on the 75th's DUI, the description of which reads:

DUI for the 75th Infantry Regiment.



“Blue is the color for Infantry. The two elephant tusks are used to represent Burma, and in forming and arch supporting the Indian Star allude to Burma being the eastern ‘Gateway to India.’ The red stripe leading through the gateway signifies the defense of India and central Burma, the areas in which the regiment was engaged. The two crossed kukris (Gurkha knives) barring the gateway are used to represent the regiment’s two battle honors for service during World War II, and also symbolized the nature of jungle combat. The tusks and kukris taken together simulate the letter ‘M’ and refer to ‘Merrill’s Marauders,’ its famed World War II designation.”³

The 75th had only a short existence before being inactivated on 21 March 1956.⁴ The lineage to the Marauders and the 475th again went dormant.

On 1 January 1969, the 75th Infantry Regiment was reorganized to become the “parent organization” for all Department of the Army-authorized long range patrol units, under the Combat Arms Regimental System.⁵ The 75th retained its lineage to the Marauders and the 475th, but the unit was also granted an exception to policy that allowed it to adopt another DUI. For its DUI, the 75th chose to adapt the shoulder patch of the Marauders, which had also been worn by the 475th and the rest of the MARS Task Force. While never officially authorized, this patch was widely worn in Burma during WWII and symbolized those units. The DUI description reads:

“The colors blue, white, red and green represent four of the original six combat teams of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), commonly referred to as Merrill’s Marauders, which were identified by color. To avoid confusion, the other two colors, khaki and orange, were not represented in the design; however, khaki was represented by the color of the uniform worn by US forces in the China-Burma-India Theater during World War II. The unit’s close cooperation with the Chinese forces in the China-Burma-India Theater is represented by the sun symbol from the Chinese flag. The white star represents the Star of Burma, the country in which the Marauders campaigned during World War II. The lightning bolt is symbolic of the strike characteristics of the Marauders’ behind-the-line activities.”⁶



MARS Task Force patch



Merrill's Marauders patch

On 3 February 1986, the 75th Infantry Regiment was redesignated as the 75th Ranger Regiment. The redesignation led to the Rangers, after a long struggle, claiming official lineage to the WWII Ranger Battalions, which had previously been assigned to U.S. Army Special Forces.⁷ The Rangers were later able to show this additional World War II heritage in the form of their Shoulder Sleeve Insignia (SSI), the adoption of which is another story. However, the 75th Ranger Regiment retained the same DUI that had been approved for wear on 18 March 1969, thereby honoring the contributions of the Marauders, the 475th Infantry, and the MARS Task Force to Ranger history and legacy. 🇺🇸

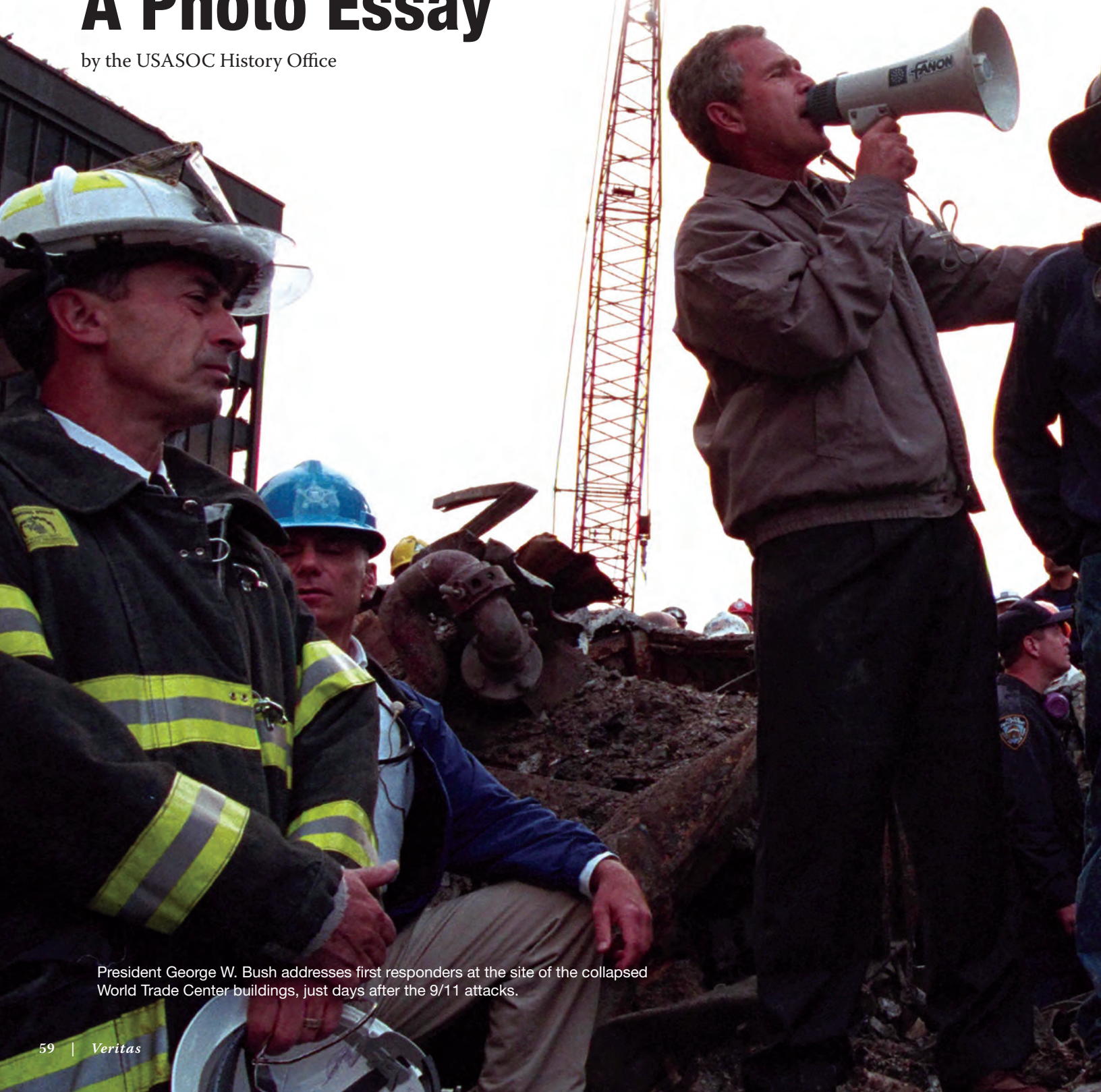
Endnotes

- 1 This first Chindit expedition was Operation LONGCLOTH. A second Chindit expedition, Operation THURSDAY, entered Burma in early 1944.
- 2 For more on the MARS Task Force, see Troy J. Sacquety, “Over the Hills and Far Away: The MARS Task Force, the Ultimate Model for Long Range Penetration Warfare,” on internet at https://arsoc-history.org/articles/v5n4_over_the_hills_page_1.html.
- 3 Arthur E. Dubois, Chief Heraldic Branch Research and Development Division, to Commanding Officer, 75th Infantry Regiment, “Coat of Arms and Distinctive Insignia for the 75th Infantry Regiment,” 27 July 1954, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC. The unit motto was “Attack, Destroy, Defend.”
- 4 Department of the Army Lineage and Honors, 75th Ranger Regiment, on internet at <https://history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/inf/0075ra.htm>.
- 5 John H. Maddox to Commanding Officer, The Institute of Heraldry, “Parent Organization for all DA Authorized Long Range Patrol (LRP) Units,” 10 January 1969, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 6 G.W. Dundas, “Distinctive Insignia for the 75th Infantry,” 18 March 1969, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC; Maddox to Commanding Officer, The Institute of Heraldry, “Parent Organization for all DA Authorized Long Range Patrol (LRP) Units,” 11 March 1969, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC. Company sized LRP units were serving at the divisional and brigade level. Concurrently with the adoption of the DUI, the 75th changed its motto to *Sua Sponte* (Of their own accord) because the old motto of “Attack, Destroy, Defend” reflected a traditional infantry mission, not the current LRP role.
- 7 Gerald T. Luchino, TIOH, to Commander, 75th Ranger Regiment, “SUBJECT: Distinctive Unit Insignia for the 75th Ranger Regiment,” 10 October 1990, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC; John A. Wickham, Jr., Headquarters, Department of the Army, General Orders No. 7, “75th Ranger Regiment,” 14 February 1986, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.

20 YEARS OF ARSOF AT WAR

A Photo Essay

by the USASOC History Office



President George W. Bush addresses first responders at the site of the collapsed World Trade Center buildings, just days after the 9/11 attacks.



20th ANNIVERSARY | 9/11

STRENGTH FROM TRAGEDY

Following the tragic events of 11 September 2001, the Department of Defense called on ARSOF to spearhead the Global War on Terrorism. In Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, ARSOF soldiers took the fight to Al Qaeda, the terrorist organization responsible for the 9/11 attacks. ARSOF also supported operations in the Middle East, the Philippines, Africa, and Latin America in the years that followed.

Over the past two decades, USASOC expanded to meet increased operational demands. New organizations included the 1st Special Forces Command, U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command, 95th Civil Affairs Brigade, 528th Sustainment Brigade (Special Operations), 8th Psychological Operations Group, and additional battalions activated under existing units. The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School also adapted training to meet the continuously evolving requirements of the modern battlefield.

This photo essay depicts ARSOF demonstrating strength from tragedy, in the years since 9/11. Today, ARSOF soldiers remain at the tip of the spear, fighting violent extremism, freeing the oppressed, and confronting emerging threats.

—*Sine Pari!*





An aerial view of the Pentagon, taken two days after 9/11, reveals the extent of the damage.



Joint Special Operations Task Force – North Commander, Colonel John F. Mulholland, Jr., meets with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld in December 2001.



Afghan villagers share cookies and tea with Civil Affairs and 101st Airborne Division soldiers in 2002.



A 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment MH-47 Chinook conducts a training flight over New York Harbor in September 2003.



A PSYOP soldier distributes pamphlets to Filipino villagers in November 2003.



Special Forces soldiers observe the Iraqi village of Ayn Sifni in April 2003.



A Civil Affairs soldier greets a local imam at the grand opening of a medical center in Baghdad, Iraq, January 2004.



Special Forces soldiers engage targets from a ground mobility vehicle during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, 2004.



An MH-47 Chinook from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment navigates a tight space in Afghanistan, 2006.



A Gold Star parent etches the name of his loved one from the USASOC Memorial Wall, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 2007.



A Special Forces soldier builds rapport with an Afghan child, 2007.



A Special Forces soldier and his Iraqi counterpart prepare to raid a suspected Al Qaeda in Iraq location in September 2008.



Special Forces soldiers are extracted from a mountain pinnacle in Zabol Province, Afghanistan, by a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter in 2010.



Psychological Operations, Civil Affairs, and Cultural Support Team members question an Afghan female through an interpreter during a Special Operations mission in Afghanistan, 2011.



Suspected insurgents are exfiltrated by Army Special Operations soldiers in Afghanistan, 2011.



A veterinarian serving in Civil Affairs trains his Afghan counterpart in 2013.



A Special Forces soldier makes a new friend at a medical clinic in Afghanistan, 2013.



A Special Forces soldier and U.S. Marine Corps Joint Terminal Attack Controller brace for the debris cloud from an approaching CH-53 Super Stallion during a March 2014 tactical recovery exercise.





An MH-60 Black Hawk from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment conducts aerial refueling, 2013.



Rangers and 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment soldiers rehearse assaulting via MH-6 helicopters in July 2018.



An ARSOF soldier pulls security during a 2019 combat operation in Afghanistan.

OUT OF MANY, ONE

The ARSOF Diversity Microsite

In March 2021, the USASOC History Office launched a microsite dedicated to diversity in current and legacy Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF). This microsite relates examples of ARSOF diversity from World War II to the present, while honoring the service and sacrifice of all people who answered the call to defend the nation. Diversity is defined by the Army as “all attributes, experiences, cultures, characteristics, and backgrounds of [the force] which are reflective of the Nation we serve and enable the Army to deploy, fight, and win.” In 2020, senior special operations leaders called diversity “a strategic imperative which we must embrace in order to adapt, compete, and win.” Indeed, as this site shows, diversity has always been critical to ARSOF success. It has brought in skills, talents, backgrounds, and experiences that have proven indispensable during times of competition and conflict.

Diversity within ARSOF has included foreign-born soldiers serving as translators, radio and loudspeaker operators, and in covert operations during World War II; European displaced persons in Special Forces (SF) and psychological warfare (psywar) units in the early Cold War; and Asian-Americans and native Koreans

supporting Army psywar, civil affairs, and unconventional warfare during the Korean War. African Americans have long served with distinction in ARSOF, to include the 2nd Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) in Korea. ARSOF has also long-benefited from the service of Hispanic-Americans, to include 8th SFG soldiers training Bolivian Rangers who neutralized Communist revolutionary Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara in 1967. Women have served in, alongside, and in support of ARSOF since World War II, to include as Cultural Support Teams (CSTs) in Afghanistan. These are just a few examples of how people of diverse backgrounds, united in common cause, have contributed to ARSOF success on the battlefield. Please visit the site for more information.

Explore Arsof Diversity History at
<https://arsof-history.org/diversity/>



Endnotes

- 1 U.S. Army, “About Diversity,” n.d., <https://www.armydiversity.army.mil/adoAbout/Index.html>.
- 2 ASD (SO/LIC) and USSOCOM, Memorandum for All SOF Personnel, “SUBJECT: Diversity and Inclusion in SOF – Why It Matters and What We Must Do,” 2020, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.

Example Content:



The 5th Loudspeaker & Leaflet's predominantly European born linguists assembled. According to T/O&E 20-77, a full-strength Loudspeaker and Leaflet Company had seventeen linguists, with four in the Propaganda Platoon (or Section) and the rest in the Loudspeaker Platoon.



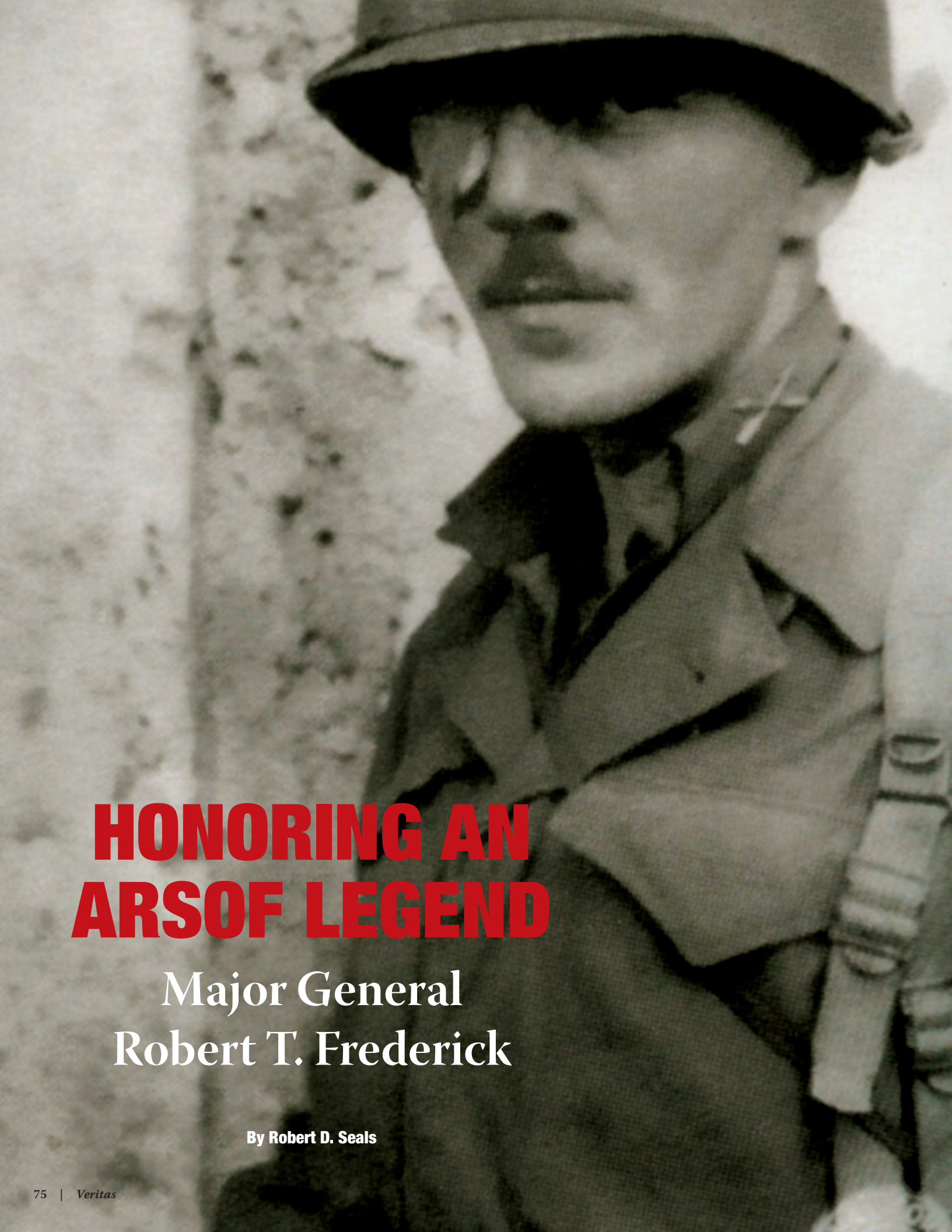
Returning to Vietnam in September 1968, Tyrone J. Adderly served with the 5th SFG. This picture was taken on the B-55 MIKE Force compound, co-located with group headquarters.



A CST soldier hands out cooking supplies during a women's shura in the village of Oshay, Uruzgan province, Afghanistan, 4 May 2011.



Russian "Jeep" captured in the vicinity of Naktong, South Korea, by the Ivanhoe Security Force (ISF). The ISF was a task-organized counter-guerrilla unit under the 2nd ID, comprised largely of native South Koreans.



HONORING AN ARSOF LEGEND

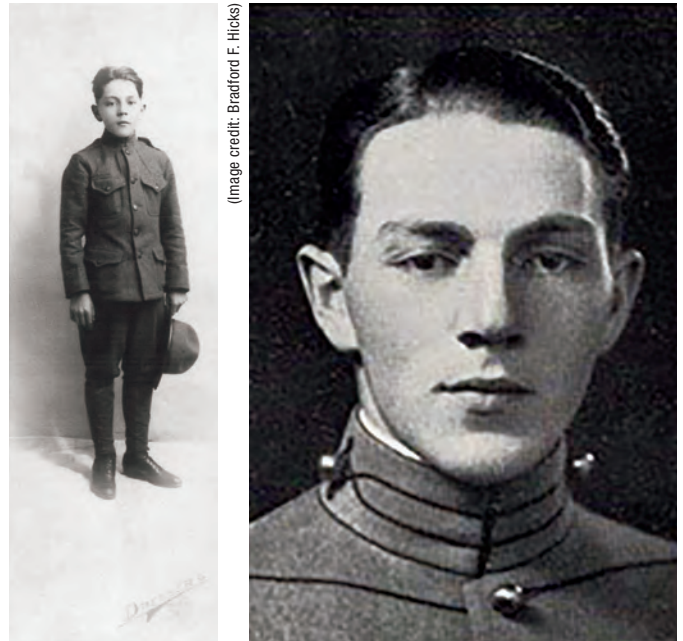
Major General
Robert T. Frederick

By Robert D. Seals

In a small ceremony held on 3 December 2021, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) History Office dedicated its building (E-1930) on Desert Storm Drive, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to Major General (MG) Robert T. Frederick, legendary commander of the World War II American-Canadian First Special Service Force. The newly minted MG Robert T. Frederick USASOC History Building is the hub of USASOC's historical program, and houses personnel workspaces, a conference room, a reference library, and repositories of historical assets.¹ This article summarizes the life and career of the building's namesake, MG Frederick, dubbed "The Last Fighting General" by one author.² His timeless example of leadership and historic connection to U.S. Army Special Forces made him an ideal candidate for this dedication.

Born to an eye, ear, nose and throat doctor and a nurse in San Francisco, California, on 14 March 1907, Robert Tryon Frederick was the oldest of two children. In 1921, he began his military career at age 14 as a private in Company I, 159th Infantry, California National Guard, adding two years to his age to enable him to enlist. Additional service in the Enlisted Reserve Corps and Citizens' Military Training Camps, and a promotion to corporal, followed. In 1924, Frederick graduated from the Staunton Military Academy in Virginia and was accepted as a cadet in the U.S. Military Academy, Class of 1928.³ At West Point, he was considered a "military ringer" (experienced cadet) due to his prior Army service.

Frederick graduated from the Military Academy (and got married) on 9 June 1928, earning a commission as a second lieutenant in the Coast Artillery Corps (CAC). He was thereafter stationed at Fort Winfield Scott, Presidio of San Francisco, California. He began primary flight school at Brooks Field, San Antonio, Texas, in



(Image credit: Bradford F. Hicks)

Left: From a young age, Robert T. Frederick showed a proclivity toward military service. **Right:** Robert T. Frederick, U.S. Military Academy, Class of 1928.

1930, but did not complete the program. Frederick then served in a variety of CAC troop assignments before duty with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in Oregon, in 1933. While with the CCC, he won praise for his resourcefulness and initiative. On 1 July 1934, Frederick was promoted to first lieutenant and selected as Aide-de-Camp for the Commanding General, Ninth Coast Artillery District, Presidio of San Francisco.⁴

Then-Captain Frederick graduated from the Coast Artillery School at Fort Monroe, Virginia, in 1938, and the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1939. He then served at Fort Shafter, Territory of Hawaii, in a CAC anti-aircraft assignment. In February 1941, Major Frederick authored a six-page staff study, in which he made an ominous prediction of a surprise "initial attack by Japan [on] the ships in Pearl Harbor, and airdromes on Oahu," without a declaration of war.⁵ In August 1941, just four months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and American entry into World War II, he joined the War Department General Staff in Washington, DC, for service in the War Plans Division under MG Dwight D. Eisenhower.⁶

Shortly after his promotion to lieutenant colonel on 1 February 1942, Frederick authored a critical fourteen-page analysis of British eccentric Geoffrey N. Pyke's "Mastery of the Snows" proposal for Operation PLOUGH. In this paper, Pyke had advocated using a commando force, trained in winter mountain warfare, to conduct raids against strategic targets in Nazi-occupied areas in Europe using a specialized tracked vehicle, not yet developed.⁷ Frederick considered PLOUGH



The MG Robert T. Frederick USASOC History Office sign outside of Building E-1930, along Desert Storm Drive, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.



(Image credit: Dwight D. Eisenhower President Library, Museum, and Boyhood Home)

Brigadier General (BG) Dwight D. Eisenhower (center) confers with War Plans Division colleagues BGs Robert W. Crawford (left) and Leonard Gerow (right), in Washington, DC, January, 1942. Promoted to MG in March, Eisenhower thereafter selected Frederick to organize, command, and train the First Special Service Force.



The guest of honor at the USASOC History Office building dedication, Bradford F. Hicks, MG Frederick's grandson, brought his grandfather's original FSSF crossed arrows, worn during World War II.

operationally unfeasible. In spite of his criticisms, Eisenhower viewed him as an authority on winter mountain warfare, and hand-selected him to organize, train, and command the combined American-Canadian First Special Service Force (FSSF).⁸

Frederick was promoted to colonel (COL) when the FSSF was activated at Fort William Henry Harrison, Montana, on 9 July 1942. Given six months to prepare the unit for combat, Frederick wasted no time. He led from the front at every step.⁹ He was the first man out of the aircraft door in the unit's initial parachute jump, wearing low-quarter shoes since his jump boots had not yet arrived. Frederick was instrumental in procuring nonstandard equipment for the force. This included the lightweight, highly reliable M-41 Johnson light machine gun ("Johnny Gun"), the tracked M-29 Cargo Carrier ("Weasel"), and the distinctive Case V-42 Fighting Knife, which he helped design and made standard issue for the Force.¹⁰ Frederick also championed the wear of crossed arrows (first worn by the U.S. Army Indian Scouts) as a collar device, as well as a unique Shoulder Sleeve Insignia (SSI), a red arrowhead patch with USA and CANADA embroidered in white. Both were approved and worn by the Force.¹¹

After months of training, the Force was bound for war, and it was COL Frederick's subsequent combat record that later earned him the reputation as an aggressive and inspiring leader. For its first assignment, the FSSF was selected to spearhead the liberation of the Aleutian Islands (Operation COTTAGE) from the Japanese, starting with Kiska, on 15 August 1943. In

rubber assault boats, the Force fought strong currents and heavy winds to secure the beachhead for the main amphibious landing. Frederick himself paddled five hours to get to shore and, like his men, arrived exhausted. Fortunately, Japanese forces had withdrawn before the landing, but this dry run had provided an invaluable learning experience for him and the unit.¹²

After Kiska, COL Frederick successfully lobbied for the FSSF to have a combat role in Europe. Following additional training, the FSSF deployed to Italy where the Fifth U.S. Army, commanded by Lieutenant General (LTG) Mark W. Clark, was stymied by the Germans' strong mountain defenses. Arriving in Naples, Italy, on 19 November 1943, the Force was tasked to break through the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division defenses on the German Winter Line. Frederick and a hand-picked team of scouts reconnoitered the approach routes and key terrain objectives, with a goal of minimizing casualties and preserving the element of surprise. He then led his soldiers in an overnight assault on 2-3 December 1943 that resulted in the successful capture of both Monte La Difensa and nearby Monte La Remetanea. Frederick was wounded in action three times by January 1944. His leadership and intrepidity in combat also merited promotion to brigadier general (BG) on 18 January.¹³

On 1 February 1944, the FSSF began their aggressive night patrols outside Anzio, Italy, earning the nickname "The Devil's Brigade." The Force then spearheaded the drive to Rome in June by securing key bridges for the



A weary COL Frederick rests after the laborious amphibious assault on Kiska. Although the Japanese had departed prior to the attack, Operation COTTAGE provided an invaluable learning experience for the Force.

Allied armor advance. During the fighting, BG Frederick was wounded another four times in the neck, arm, and leg.¹⁴ On 4 June 1944, Rome became the first Axis capital to be liberated by the Allies. By then, Frederick had become a favorite of LTG Clark, who described him as an "outstanding, courageous leader," clearly capable

Left: The First Special Service Force Shoulder Sleeve Insignia (SSI) arrowhead provided the symbolism for the Special Forces and USASOC SSIs. **Right:** BG Frederick (right), LTG Mark W. Clark (second from right), and other Fifth U.S. Army officers review a map on the morning of 4 June 1944, the day of Rome's liberation.





Always commanding from the front, Frederick leads the FSSF command section out of the village of Radicosa during combat operations in Italy.

of higher command.¹⁵

BG Frederick relinquished command of the Force on 23 June to lead the 1st Allied Airborne Task Force in Operation DRAGOON, the Allied invasion of Southern France. Promoted to major general on 1 August 1944, he soon thereafter parachuted into France. This jump aggravated the unhealed wounds on his right leg and led to the eighth and final award of the Purple Heart.¹⁶ On 3 December 1944, at age thirty-seven, MG Frederick took command of the 45th Infantry Division (ID), “Thunderbird,” a seasoned division that had been in combat since July 1943, with Operation HUSKY in Sicily. Despite being one of the youngest division commanders in the U.S. Army, he successfully led the 45th during the Rhineland and Central Europe campaigns. The division helped stop the German NORDWIND offensive in January 1945, liberated the Nazi death camp at Dachau, and occupied Munich, Germany, prior to Victory in Europe Day on 8 May 1945.¹⁷

When MG Frederick redeployed to the U.S. in August 1945, he returned to the Coast Artillery. He commanded the Harbor Defenses and CAC School, and oversaw the relocation of the school to Fort Winfield Scott, Presidio, in 1946. A tour at the Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base, in Montgomery, Alabama, followed, before he again went overseas in 1947 to command U.S. forces occupying Austria. From there, he returned stateside, soon becoming the Commanding General, 4th ID, later reflagged as the 6th ID. In May 1951, Frederick became the Chief, Joint U.S. Military Aid Group to Greece, but his tour was cut short due to declining health, which led to his medical retirement on 31 March 1952 at the age of forty-four.¹⁸

Frederick settled in California, remaining involved in



(Image credit: Bradford F. Hicks)



The FSSF crossed arrows and V-2 knife figure prominently in the Special Forces DUI.

Top: Two ARSOF icons after the war: MG Frederick (left) and then-BG Robert A. McClure (second from right). Considered the Father of U.S. Army Special Warfare, McClure is the namesake of the USASOC headquarters building, dedicated in his honor in January 2001. **Bottom:** At a 7 October 1960 ceremony on Fort Bragg, retired MG Frederick (left) presented the original FSSF colors to the 7th Special Forces Group (SFG) to commemorate the activation of the 1st Special Forces Regiment. To Frederick's left is COL Irwin A. Edwards, 7th SFG Commander.

veterans' groups and farming. In 1955, he was almost killed in a severe automobile accident and spent weeks in a coma. He rallied and, in October 1960, presented the original FSSF colors to the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg, at the activation of the honorary 1st Special Forces Regiment. This event crystallized the connection between the FSSF and U.S. Army Special Forces (SF), which remains strong to this day. Not only do all SF Groups trace their lineage and honors to the FSSF, but their heraldic items are rich with Force symbolism. For example, both the V-42 knife and crossed arrows were incorporated into the SF Distinctive Unit Insignia (DUI), which was approved on 8 July 1960.¹⁹

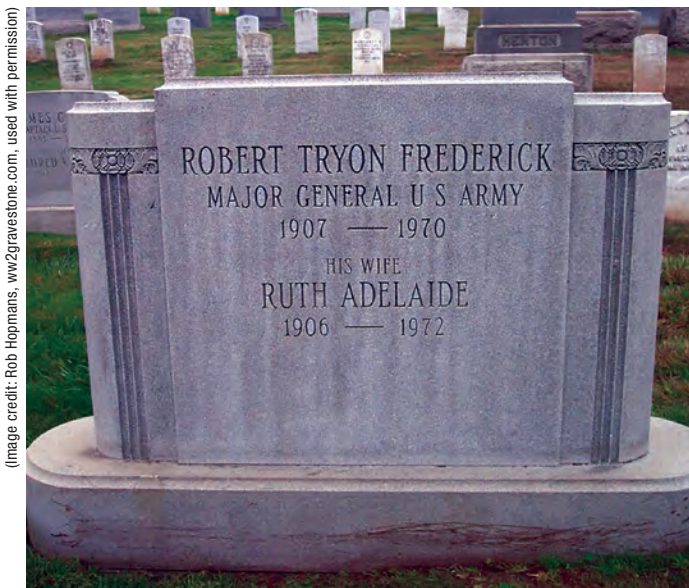
Having spent his life serving the nation and paving the way for future Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOFF), Frederick died on 29 November 1970 and was interred in the National Cemetery at the Presidio of San Francisco. Although a recipient of over thirty U.S. and foreign awards during his career (including the Silver Star, two Distinguished Service Crosses, and eight Purple Hearts), Frederick had always remained humble.²⁰ "There isn't much to say about me," he remarked after the war. "And these decorations I wear, well, they represent the work of my men [who] carried impossible loads, successfully completed impossible tasks, and won impossible fights."²¹

MG Robert T. Frederick received numerous posthumous honors in recognition of his initiative, innovation, aggression, leadership from the front, and concern for his men. In 2007, he was named a Distinguished Member of the SF Regiment. Five years later, he was inducted into the U.S. Special Operations Command

Commando Hall of Honor. Now, the USASOC History Office also stands as a monument to MG Frederick. It is in his honor that this office will continue to preserve ARSOFF history and serve ARSOFF soldiers who are, like their FSSF forebears, "Without Equal."

Endnotes

- 1 Major General Robert T. Frederick USASOC History Office Building Dedication Ceremony Program, 3 December 2021.
- 2 Anne Hicks, *The Last Fighting General; The Biography of Robert Tryon Frederick* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military History, 2006). Anne Frederick Hicks was Frederick's youngest daughter.
- 3 Hicks, *The Last Fighting General*, 12-15; MG Robert T. Frederick, Official Military Personnel File (OMPF), National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO, hereafter Frederick OMPF.
- 4 Frederick OMPF. At West Point, Frederick graduated 124 of 261 in his class.
- 5 Memorandum for Chairman, Joint Anti-Aircraft Committee, Fort Shafter, Territory of Hawaii, 24 February 1941, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 6 Frederick OMPF. Eisenhower commented in a 1942 efficiency report, "Highly intelligent-thorough-hard working-superior team worker. Exercises sound judgement to a superior degree. A superior organizer. In comparing this officer with all officers, I would place him in the upper third. General officer material."
- 7 For more on what this vehicle became (the M29 "Weasel"), visit <https://arsof-history.org/weasel/index.html>.
- 8 Robert Todd Ross, *The Super Commandos, First Special Service Force, 1942-1944* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military History, 2006), 10-12, 26-28; Anne Frederick Hicks, "The War Made Him, Peacetime Broke Him," *Army* (September 1982): 50.
- 9 One of the training standards was the ability to traverse 45 miles on skis, carrying 60 pounds, in twelve hours, an early indicator of ARSOFF's reliance and emphasis upon strength and endurance.
- 10 Headquarters, First Special Service Force, "SUBJECT: Planning," 21 September 1942, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC; Frederick OMPF; Ross, *The Super Commandos*, 258-261. For the V-42 knife, V stood for Victory and 42 for the year of design (1942).
- 11 Memorandum for the Director of Military Personnel, SOS, "SUBJECT: Request for authorization of Insignia," 26 July 1942, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC; War Department, Army Regulation 600-35: *Personnel, Prescribed Service Uniform* (Washington, DC, 31 March 1944), 49, 51.
- 12 Kenneth Finlayson, "Operation Cottage: First Special Service Force, Kiska Campaign," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 4:2 (2007): 30-43. After COTTAGE, Frederick was recommended for the Distinguished Service Medal, but Alaska Defense Command argued that the award was not merited.
- 13 Kenneth Finlayson, "Wars Should be Fought in Better Country than This," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 5:2 (2007): 48-63. The FSSF casualties were immense. Frederick himself was wounded four times in the mountain fighting.
- 14 Ross, *The Super Commandos*, 186-187, 226-231; Hicks, "The War," 54.
- 15 Frederick OMPF.
- 16 Hicks, *The Last Fighting General*, 148-155; Frederick OMPF.
- 17 Frederick OMPF; Headquarters, Seventh Army, Memorandum, "SUBJECT: Special Rating of General Officers," 21 May 1945, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC. Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch described Frederick as "One of the most promising officers of his age in the Army...an outstanding leader of combat forces," and ranked him in the top third of all his generals in the report.
- 18 Frederick OMPF.
- 19 Frederick OMPF; Headquarters, 7th Special Forces Group, Letter to MG Robert T. Frederick, 21 October 1960, copy in USASOC History



Gravestone for MG Robert T. Frederick at the National Cemetery at the Presidio of San Francisco.

Office, Fort Bragg, NC; email from Tom Davies, Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, to Robert D. Seals, "SUBJECT: RE: WSC Quote Request, Follow Up," 27 November 2019, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC; The Institute of Heraldry, U.S. Army Branch Insignia, Special Forces, online at: <https://tiah.army.mil/Catalog/Heraldry.aspx?HeraldryId=15361&CategoryId=9362&grp=2&menu=Uniformed%20Services&from=search>. When it comes to MG Frederick, separating fact from fiction can be challenging. After 1945, men's adventure magazines took his career for pulp fodder. For example, the January 1960 edition of *Action for Men* is seemingly the source of the oft repeated but unverified

Churchill quote claiming Frederick as "the greatest fighting general of all time."

- 20 Memorandum, Headquarters, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, "SUBJECT: Request Approval to Dedicate the Command History E-1930 Building as the Major General Robert T. Frederick Building," Enclosure 4, Biographical Sketch, 19 June 2020, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 21 "Most Wounded General in War Visits S.F. Home," *San Francisco Examiner*, 24 September 1945.



The author (left) with Bradford F. Hicks, grandson of MG Robert T. Frederick, at the building dedication on 3 December 2021.

The USASOC History Office

A Brief History

by Christopher E. Howard

USASOC is a command proud of its history, which extends back to the psychological warfare campaign in World War I and postwar military government efforts. The USASOC History Office exists to ensure that Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) history is preserved and effectively presented to both internal and external audiences in ways that both inform and inspire. It implements the Army Historical Program at the USASOC level and provides timely historical support and analysis to ARSOF leaders and their units. This support can take many forms, as seen below.

History

The USASOC History Office was established as part of the Commanding General's (CG's) Special Staff, shortly after the activation of USASOC on 1 December 1989. In its earliest years, it consisted of a Command Historian and one or two assistant historians. These historians documented ARSOF participation in Operations JUST CAUSE, DESERT SHIELD, and DESERT STORM, and in 1994, produced *Standing Up the MACOM*, a command history covering USASOC's first five years of existence.

Following the 9/11 attacks on the American homeland, ARSOF played a prominent role in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). As ARSOF expanded to meet the demands of GWOT, so too did the History Office. By 2011, it had five Department of the Army civilian historians: the Command Historian, Deputy Command Historian, and branch historians for Civil

Affairs (CA), Psychological Operations (PSYOP), and Special Forces (SF). The Deputy covered the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) and the 75th Ranger Regiment history, while dedicated Special Operations Aviation and ARSOF Support/Sustainment historians were added in 2017 and 2018, respectively. The office also established a History Support Center, consisting of archivists, digitization specialists, and graphic design specialists.

A major focus of the office in the post-9/11 era has been historical publications. This began when Lieutenant General Bryan D. Brown, CG, USASOC, from 2000 to 2002, commissioned a book on the first year of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Published in 2003 as *Weapon of Choice: ARSOF in Afghanistan*, it was followed soon after by *All Roads Lead to Baghdad: Army Special Operations Forces in Iraq*, documenting ARSOF contributions to the initial phase of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

In 2005, the History Office began publishing *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, reviving the name of a Vietnam War-era newsletter produced by USAJFKSWCS. Initially a quarterly publication, *Veritas* became less frequent over time, as the office diversified its publication efforts. New publications included *The Last Full Measure of Devotion*, honoring the ARSOF Fallen from the post-9/11 era; *Indomitable Valor*, recognizing ARSOF Medal of Honor recipients; an Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Primer; and a series of branch-specific history handbooks.

In late 2018, the History Office established internal

“To be a successful soldier you must know history, [and] read it objectively...”
General George S. Patton, Jr.

Mission

Preserve the institutional memory and organizational history of ARSOF; inform ARSOF leaders and soldiers, the Army, the Department of Defense, and the nation on ARSOF legacy; and inspire ARSOF soldiers past, present, and future by connecting them with their rich heritage.

Priorities

- Execute a historical program in accordance with Commanding General, USASOC priorities and guidance
- Perform regulatory functions of a U.S. Army command history office, including production of the annual command history and execution of an oral history program
- Preserve the institutional knowledge of the command by collecting and safeguarding ARSOF historical assets
- Publish print and web-based historical products conveying ARSOF history and legacy
- Provide historical support to commanders and units across the ARSOF enterprise.

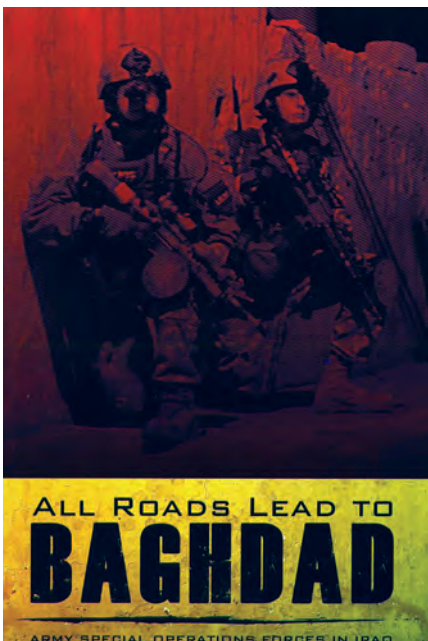
ARSOF History websites on the NIPR and SIPR networks and, in 2019, it launched a public website. These websites feature *Veritas* articles, thematic microsites, biographies of iconic ARSOF figures, and other content from the office’s print publications. The public website, <http://arsof-history.org>, currently averages 35,000 monthly page views.

Beyond publications, the History Office has collected historically significant materials and conducted hundreds of oral history interviews with current and former ARSOF personnel. The overseas collection mission began in 1991, when the Command Historian deployed to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to document the ARSOF role in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. Since then, USASOC historians have de-

ployed to ARSOF forward locations around the world, including Afghanistan, Colombia, Haiti, Iraq, Jordan, the Philippines, Qatar, and Syria.

In 2009, the History Office assumed responsibility for the ARSOF archival holdings, previously located at USAJFKSWCS. This repository is not staffed or chartered as a public research facility, in the same vein as the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, the National Archives and Records Administration, or the National Personnel Records Center. However, it serves as a research asset for the command. Looking ahead, the History Office plans to make its collection even more accessible to the ARSOF force through a cloud-based digital asset management solution.

Another enduring mission of the History Office





The Special Forces Statue stands guard at the USASOC Memorial plaza.



Major Richard J. Meadows is the namesake of USASOC's Meadows Field.

is to provide historical support to leaders across the command. This support takes many forms, including information papers in response to specific requests for information; training, education, and leader development; and assistance with historical display projects that visually convey ARSOF history. Other examples of historical support are assistance with unit memorialization actions, providing distinguished visitors with guided tours of the USASOC Memorial Plaza, and presenting an ARSOF History overview during USASOC onboarding.

Recent Efforts

While not unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the History Office adapted quickly, with only minor impacts on the mission. During this period, it published two issues of *Veritas*, a 528th Sustainment Brigade History Handbook, and an updated ARSOF History



The outdoor M29 'weasel' display in honor of the 75th Anniversary of Menton Day, December 2019.

Timeline. It also launched a series of thematic microsites, including ARSOF in the Korean War, ARSOF in Panama, and Diversity & Inclusion. It continued support to training and education by teaching CA, PSYOP, and SF history classes at both the institutional (USAJFKSWCS) and unit level. One recent instance of this came in May 2021, when the PSYOP Historian led a leader professional development (LPD) session for 1st Psychological Operations Battalion focusing on Operation JUST CAUSE.

Pandemic-induced travel restrictions impaired in-person collection efforts, but digital collections continued unabated. For example, the office has, to-date, digitally collected over 1,500 documents related to the COVID-19 response. These have been transmitted to the U.S. Army Center of Military History as part of an Army-wide effort, in addition to being retained locally for future reference.

In 2021, the History Office spearheaded USASOC's commemoration of the 20th anniversary of 9/11 and the start of GWOT. This effort included the redistribution of GWOT-themed products; a photo display outside the Heritage Auditorium; filmed testimonials from ARSOF soldiers, civilians, and veterans describing the impact of 9/11; and a microsite hosting digital content related to the commemoration. It also updated *The Last Full Measure of Devotion* to include all 377 ARSOF Fallen since 11 September 2001, and developed historical displays for the USASOC Force Modernization Center.

On 3 December 2021, the History Office formally

dedicated its building in memory of Major General Robert T. Frederick, who commanded the First Special Service Force (FSSF) from 1942 to 1944. The FSSF was a combined American – Canadian unit specializing in mountain warfare that made decisive contributions to the Allied victory in World War II. Disbanded on 5 December 1944, commemorated annually as Menton Day, the FSSF is the lineage predecessor of all U.S. Army Special Forces units. The guest of honor at the dedication ceremony was Mr. Bradford F. Hicks, grandson of MG Frederick. Brigadier General Steven M. Marks, Deputy Commanding General, USASOC, provided the keynote address. Other distinguished visitors included a Canadian SOF officer serving at Fort Bragg, and leaders from USAJFKSWCS, 1st Special Forces Command, and the U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command.

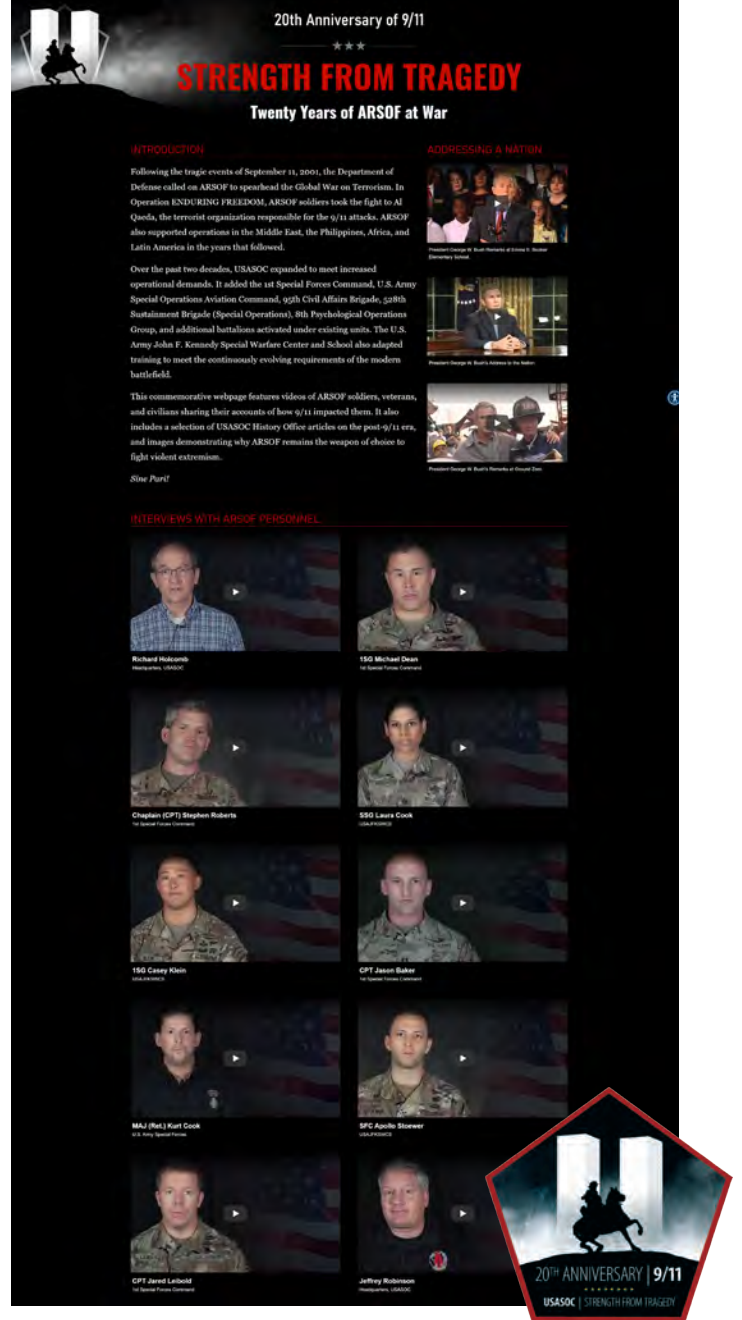
Current and Future Efforts

With a reduction of historians in recent years, the History Office has become leaner and therefore more targeted in its historical efforts. In 2022, the office will launch a revamped public website, distribute the third edition of *The Last Full Measure of Devotion*, and publish the thirty-eighth issue of *Veritas*. It will support the commemoration of milestones in ARSOF history, including the 80th anniversary of the FSSF activation and the 70th anniversaries of the activation of 10th Special Forces Group and the Psychological Warfare Center (predecessor to USAJFKSWCS). It also plans to revise and codify the USASOC History Program and energize unit-level history programs. Finally, it will continue to provide historical expertise and support to ARSOF leaders and their units.

Preserve, Inform, Inspire!



Bradford F. Hicks, grandson of MG Robert T. Frederick, reveals the plaque dedicating the USASOC History Office building to his grandfather.



Website and logo developed to commemorate the 20th anniversary of 9/11.



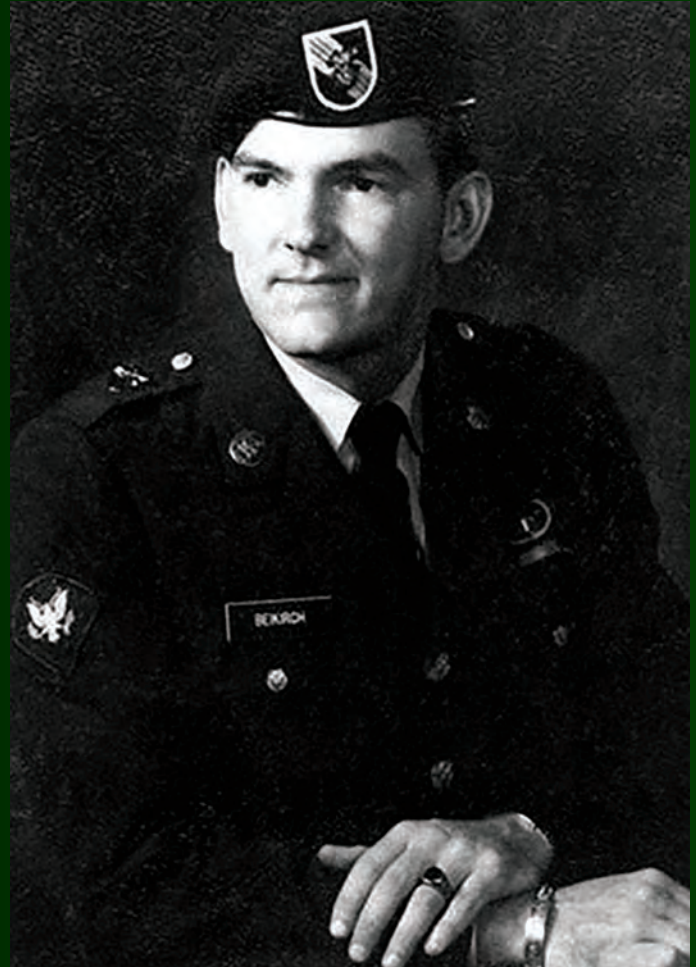
BG Steven M. Marks, Deputy Commanding General, USASOC, makes his remarks at the ceremony dedicating the USASOC History Office building to MG Robert T. Frederick.

In Memoriam

SGT GARY B. BEIKIRCH (1947–2021)

Medal of Honor Recipient | Special Forces | Vietnam

On 26 December 2021, the Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) community lost one of its heroes, Medal of Honor recipient Gary B. Beikirch. Born in August 1947, Sergeant (SGT) Beikirch entered the U.S. Army in 1967. After airborne, Special Forces (SF), and medical training, he reported to Company B, 5th SF Group, in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) in 1969. While serving in Kontum Province, Beikirch distinguished himself in the defense of Camp Dak Seang on 1 April 1970. During a devastating, coordinated enemy attack, he repeatedly exposed himself to withering fire to treat and evacuate friendly casualties until eventually collapsing from his own serious wounds. For his conspicuous gallantry in action at the risk of his own life, he received the Medal of Honor on 15 October 1973. While his recent passing is a loss for the ARSOF community, SGT Beikirch's legacy will continue to inspire Army Special Operations and SF soldiers for generations to come.



For more on SGT Gary B. Beikirch, please visit:
https://arsof-history.org/medal_of_honor/recipient_beikirch.html



Commander, USASOC
ATTN: AOHS (Veritas)
E-2929 Desert Storm Drive
Fort Bragg, NC 28310-9110